

Sūrah Al-Anfāl

[The Spoils]

Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed in Madīnah and it has 75 Verses and 10 Sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.

Verse 1

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١﴾

They ask you about the spoils. Say, "The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger." So, fear Allah, and set your relations right, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers. [1]

Thematic Contents of the Sūrah

Sūrah Al-Anfāl now opening here is a Madanī Sūrah. Sūrah Al-A'raf which appeared previous to it carried a description of the ignorance and hostility from the Mushrikīn and the disbelief and mischief from the people of the Book, as well as a discussion of the subjects related to these.

In this Sūrah, most of the subjects are connected with the battle of Badr which was the occasion when these very people met their sad end in defeat and Muslims succeeded in scoring a victory against them. This was Divine favour and blessing for Muslims and a punishment and retribution for disbelievers.

Since the main reason behind this blessing and reward for Muslims is their absolute sincerity, Godliness and unity - and this sincerity and unity is a result of their total obedience to Allah and His Messenger - therefore, it is at the very beginning of the Sūrah that stress has been laid on righteous conduct rooted in the fear of Allah (*Taqwā*) and on obedience due to Him and His Messenger - and on the need to remember Allah and to trust in Him (*Dhikr* of Allah and *Tawakkul* mentioned in verse 2).

Commentary

This verse is related to an event which came to pass in the battle of Badr. If this event is kept in sight before going to the detailed explanation of the verse, it will make it easy to understand.

What happened is that Muslims, when they won in the battle of Badr - the first confrontation of Kufr and Islam - they had some war spoils on their hands. Its distribution led to a state of affairs among the noble Companions which did not befit the high standard of sincerity and unity around which the whole life of these blessed souls was moulded. Therefore, it was within the very first verse, that the standing policy on this subject was settled for ever - so that, there remains nothing in the hearts of this group of people blessed with sanctity, except truth, sincerity, unity and sacrifice.

Details of this event have been reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Mustadrak of Ḥakīm and elsewhere in the words of Sayyidnā ‘Ubādah رضى الله عنه who was a participant in the battle of Badr. According to the report, someone asked Sayyidnā ‘Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit about the meaning of the word: *al-anfāl* in the verse cited above. He said, 'This verse has, of course, been revealed about us, that is, about participants in the battle of Badr. This was in the background of some difference of opinion which arose among us as to the distribution of war spoils and which affected our moral conduct adversely. Then, through this verse, Allah Ta‘ālā took away the spoils from our hands and entrusted them with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who distributed them equally over all those who had participated in the Jihād of Badr.

The situation at the battle of Badr was that all of us marched out with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. It was after a tough fight between

the two groups that Allah Ta'ālā had the enemy defeated. At this point, our forces were split in three sub-groups. Some pursued the enemy so that they would not come back. Some went on to collect spoils left by the disbelievers, while some others formed a cordon around the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and kept guarding him against any surprise attack by the enemy in ambush somewhere. When fighting was over, the night came and everyone returned to home base, those who had collected spoils said: We have collected this booty, therefore, no one but us has a share in it. And those who had pursued the enemy said: You do not deserve it more than us because we were the ones who forced the enemy to retreat and run and which gave you the opportunity to collect spoils in peace . And those who remained standing around the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to protect him said: If we wanted to, we too could have joined you in collecting the spoils with you, but we devoted ourself to the task of seeing that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم remains protected, so, we too are deserving of it.

This conversation among the Companions ultimately reached the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم whereupon this verse cited above was revealed. It made it very clear that the spoils belonged to Allah. There was none to own it or stake a claim over it, except the one to whom the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would give it. As for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he distributed the spoils equally over all participants of the Jihād as ordained Divinely. (Ibn Kathīr) Everyone was pleased with this decree of Allah and His Messenger - and naturally ashamed of the unbecoming state of affairs which arose between them because of their mutual approach to remain ahead of the others.

Also in the Musnad of Aḥmad, reported there is another event which spells out the background in which this verse was revealed. It has been narrated by Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضى الله عنه. He says: 'My brother, 'Umayr fell a martyr in the battle of Badr. Out of the disbelievers who were arrayed against him, I killed Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ. I took his sword and presented myself before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. I wished that this sword be given to me. But, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ordered me to deposit it with the spoils. I was duty-bound to obey his order, but my heart ached with the thought that my brother laid down his life in this Jihād and I killed the enemy confronting him

and took possession of his sword, yet that too was taken away from me. However, despite this thought, I stepped forward to carry out the Commander's command and deposit the sword with the spoils. But, I had hardly gone far enough when this verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl was revealed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who called me back and let me have this sword.' According to some other narrations, it is also reported that Sayyidnā Sa'd رضى الله عنه had himself requested the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the particular sword be given to him, but he had said: 'This is not my property which I could give to someone, nor is this owned by you. Deposit it with the rest of the spoils. This matter will be decided in accordance with what Allah decrees.' (Ibn Kathīr, Mazharī)

It is not unlikely that both these events may have come to pass and the verse may have been revealed in answer to both.

A detailed explanation of the verse:

Here, the word: انفال (*al-anfāl*) is the plural of نفل *nafl* which means grace and reward. *Nafl* Ṣalāh, Ṣawm and Ṣadaqah are called *Nafl* because they are not compulsory or obligatory on anyone. Those who do these do so out of their free will. In the terminology of Qur'an and Sunnah, the words *nafl* and *anfāl* are also used for spoils or booty obtained from the disbelievers at the time of Jihād. But, the Qur'an has used three words to carry this sense, that is, انفال : *anfāl*, غنيمه : *ghanimah* and فبي : *fai'*. The word: *anfāl* appears right here in the present verse. As for the word: *ghanimah*, its details will appear in verse 41 of this very Sūrah. Then, details relating to the word: فبي : *fai'* find mention in Sūrah Al-Ḥashr: وَمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ (and what Allah made His Messenger get - 59:6). The meanings of these three words differ with slight variation. Since the difference between them is slight, there are occasions when one word is used for the other to mean spoils in the absolute sense. *Ghanimah* generally carries the sense of booty obtained from the adversary through fighting in Jihād. *Fai'*: فبي is booty obtained from the disbelievers without active fighting and killing, whether they abandon it or agree to give it up voluntarily. Then, *nafl* and *anfāl* are also used to refer to the reward which the Supreme Commander of Jihād may bestow upon a particular Mujāhid in return for his exemplary performance. This meaning has been reported from Sayyidnā

'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه, as in Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr. (Ibn Kathīr) Then, there are occasions when spoils as such are also identified through the terms of *nafl* and *anfāl*. In this verse, most commentators have gone by this very general meaning. The same general meaning has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī. The truth of the matter is that this word is used to carry both meanings, the general and the particular. Therefore, no difference exists here. And the best explanation in this connection has been given by Imām Abū 'Ubayd in his Kitāb al-Amwāl. He says: Lexically, *nafl* means grace, reward or gift - and it is a very special blessing of Allah Ta'ālā bestowed upon the Muslim Ummah, the most fortunate recipients of His mercy - in that the properties obtained from disbelievers through fighting in Jihād were made lawful for Muslims. Otherwise, the practice did not exist among past communities. In fact, the law which governed spoils was that such property was not lawful for anyone. All spoils were collected and deposited at one place, then, a fire or lightening would come from the heavens and burn it up. This was supposed to be a sign indicating that the God-oriented fighting was acceptable in His sight. If spoils so collected and deposited were not burnt up by the lightening from the heaven, it was supposed to be a sign that the effort was not acceptable. Therefore, the later spoils were considered rejected and ill-omened because of which it was not used by anyone.

Based on a narration from Sayyidnā Jabīr رضى الله عنه appearing in Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been reported to have said: I have been blessed with five things which were not given to any prophet or his community before me. One of the five is: اُحِلَّتْ لِي الغنائم that is, 'made lawful' for me are the spoils, though they were not lawful for anyone before me.'

The injunction of '*anfāl*' given in the cited verse is: "The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger." What it means is that its real ownership is that of Allah while the right of their disposal rests with the Messenger of Allah who distributes these in accordance with the command of Allah at his discretion.

Therefore, a group of leading authorities in Tafsīr, with Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Suddiyy and some

others among them, have said that this injunction was operative during the early period of Islam when the law of the distribution of spoils which is going to appear in the fifth section of this very verse was yet to be revealed - because there spoils as a whole have been left at the discretion of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who was to dispose them off as he wished. The detailed injunctions which appear later enjoin that one-fifth of the entire spoils should be deposited in the Bayt al-Māl (Treasury of the Muslim State) to cover the needs of common Muslims, and the remaining four-fifth should be distributed among Jihād participants under a particular law the details of which appear in authentic Aḥādīth. This detailed statement abrogated the first verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl - and some respected elders have stated that there is no case of abrogation at this place. Instead, the difference here is that of brevity and detail. The first verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl is brief with its details appearing in verse 41. However, *Fai'* property the injunctions about which have been taken up in Sūrah Al-Hashr (59) has been placed totally at the disposal of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who may act as he wishes at his discretion. Therefore, when describing the injunctions at that place, it has also been said: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُخَلَّاتٍ بِوَحْيِ الْمَلَأِ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُخَلَّاتٍ بِوَحْيِ الْمَلَأِ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُخَلَّاتٍ بِوَحْيِ الْمَلَأِ (that is, 'and what the Messenger gives you take it, and what he stops you from leave it - 59:7).

These details tell us that 'spoils' refers to properties which are obtained through Jihād confrontation, and *Fai'* properties are what is obtained without fighting and killing in Jihād. As for the word: *al-Anfāl*, it is used for both, whether the sense be general or particular, and it is also used for the reward which is bestowed by the Commander-in-Chief of Jihād on a *Ghāzī* (living Muslim warrior of a victorious Jihād force).

In this connection, there are four forms of giving awards to Ghāzies in Jihād which date back to the blessed times of the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

1. That it is proclaimed that whoever kills an adversary will become the owner of properties obtained from the soldier killed by him. This property will just not be deposited with the rest of the spoils.
2. That a group is taken out from the larger army and is sent on Jihād to a particularly targeted area with the orders that the spoils

obtained from that area will belong to the particular group sent there - subject to the obligation that one-fifth of the property thus obtained will be deposited in *Bayt al-Māl* (Treasury of the Muslim State) to be used to cover the needs of common Muslims.

3. That a particular Ghāzī is given something out of the one-fifth of spoils deposited in the *Bayt al-Māl* in return for his distinct achievement by the Amīr of Jihād under his discretion.

4. That a certain portion from the entire spoils is set aside to be given as reward to the serving cadre of the Jihād force, such as those who attend to the horses of Mujāhidin and help them with their chores. (Ibn Kathīr)

The substance of the verse is: Addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Allah Ta'ālā has said: People ask you about the spoils. You tell them that the spoils are for Allah and the Messenger, that is, no one holds a claim on them, or is their owner. Whatever the Messenger of Allah decides under the command of Allah Ta'ālā shall be the operative law.

Unity among People is Based on *Taqwā*

In the last sentence of the verse, it was said: فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ (So, fear Allah, and set your relations right, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers). This is addressed to the Companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The reference is to what happened at the battle of Badr when the noble Companions had differed among themselves about the distribution of spoils and which posed the danger that their mutual relations may become strained. Through this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has Himself settled the matter of the distribution of spoils. Now, they are to retrain their hearts for the better and set their relations right. The core of the method proposed is *Taqwā*, the fear of Allah, the sense of being responsible before Him.

Experience bears out that under the active influence of a heart filled with the fear of Allah and 'Ākhirah, major disputes get resolved in no time and deep-rooted hatreds evaporate in thin air.

Therefore, after proposing the method of *Taqwā* in this verse, it was said: أَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ that is, 'set your relations right' through *Taqwā*.

After that, it was further explained by saying: *إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ* (and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers) that is, the obedience to Allah and the Messenger should be total and perfect, if you are believers. In other words, *Imān* (faith) demands *Iṭā'ah* (obedience) and *Iṭā'ah* (obedience) is the outcome of *Taqwā* (the fear of Allah). When people become the practitioners of these virtues, their mutual disputes shall stand resolved automatically and hearts shall be filled with love rather than hostility.

Verses 2-4

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

Certainly, the believers are those whose hearts are filled with fear when (the name of) Allah is mentioned; and when His verses are recited before them, they increase them in faith and in their Lord they place their trust. [2] (They are) those who establish *Ṣalāh*, and give away from what We have given them. [3] Those are the believers in reality. For them there are high ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness, and dignified provision. [4]

Commentary

Particular Attributes of the Believer

Described in the verses cited above are particular attributes which should be the hallmark of every believer. The hint given here is that every believer should keep checking on his or her physical and spiritual condition and assess if these attributes are present in his or her person. If they are, this calls for being grateful to Allah that He blessed His servant with the attributes of true believers. And should it be that none of these attributes is present there, or is weak or feeble despite being present, then, one must either start being concerned about acquiring them or making them stronger than what they are.

The First Attribute : The Fear of Allah

The first attribute described here is: **الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ** (those whose hearts are filled with fear when {the name of} Allah is mentioned - 2). It means that their hearts are soaked in and brimming with the realization of Allah's greatness and their love for Him. This state of the heart demands that there be an attending aura of awe and fear around it. This has been mentioned in another verse of the Qur'an as a state which deserves glad tidings for all people of love: **وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخِئِنِينَ** **الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ** (that is, give glad tidings to those humble and soft people whose hearts are filled with fear when (the name of) Allah is mentioned - Al-Hajj, 22:34). In both these verses, identified there is a very special pre-requisite of the mention, thought and remembrance of Allah (*Dhikr*) which is awe and fear. Then, in yet another verse, also enumerated there is a particular property of *Dhikrullah*, that is: **أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ** (Listen! Hearts find peace through the remembrance of Allah - Al-Ra'd, 13:28).

This tells us that the fear and awe mentioned in this verse are not contrary to the peace and tranquility of the heart. For instance, the fear of a beast or enemy disturbs one's peace of heart. But, the fear which is generated in the heart as a result of the *Dhikr* of Allah is totally different from that. Therefore, the word used here is not the exact counterpart of 'fear.' It has been called: **وجل** (*wajal*) which does not mean fear (*khawf*) in the absolute sense. Instead, it is the awe, a respectful feeling of fear which emerges in the heart because of the majesty of the most exalted. Some commentators have said that, at this place, the mention and remembrance of Allah means that a person was intending to commit some sin, but when he happened to think of Allah, it made him scared of His punishment as a result of which he turned away from that sin - under this situation, such a fear would mean nothing but the fear of punishment. (Al-Bahr Al-Muhit)

The Second Attribute : Increase in 'Imān

The second attribute of the believer has been identified by saying: 'and when His verses are recited before him, they increase them in faith.' What is the meaning of increase in faith? A meaning upon which all scholars, commentators and Ḥadīth experts agree is that 'Imān or faith does increase in strength, quality and light. It is also

confirmed by experiment and observation that good deeds give strength and stability to the state of one's faith. The heart is so laid open to the acceptance of truth that good deeds become one's natural habit; if he leaves them, he feels the pinch; and he develops in himself a natural distaste for sin to the limit that he does not go even near them. This is the great station of 'Īmān, of faith which has been identified in Ḥadīth by the term: The sweetness of 'Īmān:

واذا حلت الحلاوة قلباً نشطت في العبادة الاعضاء

When the sweetness of 'Īmān settles down in someone's heart
All parts of his body start relishing its taste in acts of worship!

In short, the verse puts the second attribute of a perfect believer as: 'When the "Āyāt of Allah Ta'ālā are recited' - his faith should become more pronounced in polish and progress, as well as in the desire to do good deeds. This also helps us realize that the way Muslims at large recite and listen to the Qur'ān - paying no heed to the due etiquette and reverence of the Qur'ān nor having any idea of the greatness of Allah Ta'ālā - produces a recitation which is not what is desired, and certainly not what could be expected to generate the best of results, even if that too may not be devoid of *thawāb* (reward).

The Third Attribute : Trust in Allah

The third attribute of a believer identified here is that he or she should place their trust in Allah. The Arabic word: *Tawakkul* means trust. The sense is that the believer should have total trust in Allah, One and Pure, free of all conceivable associations and ascriptions, not simply theoretically, but in deeds too, and in all states and conditions of one's life as well. In a sound Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: This does not mean that one should abandon material causes and means when it comes to taking care of one's legitimate needs. The point is that one should not consider material means and instruments as sufficient for real success, instead of which, one should do his best, subject to his ability and courage, to assemble and utilize necessary material means. It is only after that one should entrust his matter with Allah Ta'ālā believing that He is the One who has created all means and He is certainly the One who makes means to bear fruits. What would come to be has to be what He wills. In another Ḥadīth, he said: اجعلوا في الطلب وتكلموا عليه It means: Make a moderate effort to procure

what you need through material means, and then place your trust in Him. In other words, do not let your heart and mind get bogged down with nothing but material ways and means.

The Fourth Attribute : Establishment of Ṣalāh

The fourth attribute of the believers has been described as: '(They are) those who establish Ṣalāh.' At this point, it is worth keeping in mind that the text is not talking about making, saying, offering or performing Ṣalāh, instead, what has been mentioned here is *Iqāmah* of Ṣalāh. Literally, *Iqāmah* means 'to make something stand straight.' The sense of *Iqāmah* (translated as 'establish' in absence of a precise equivalent) is that one should carry out the obligation of Ṣalāh with the fullest consideration for its etiquette and relevant conditions, exactly as explained and demonstrated by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم through his word and deed. If there is any shortcoming in observing the etiquette, and conditions, you may call it the saying or making of Ṣalāh, but you cannot call it the *Iqāmah* or establishment of Ṣalāh. As for the benefits, effects and blessings of Ṣalāh mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (of course, Ṣalāh stops from immodesty and sinfulness - Al-'Ankabūt, 29:45) those too depend on nothing but the proper establishment (*Iqāmah*) of Ṣalāh as due. When the etiquette of Ṣalāh has not been observed as due, the Ṣalāh would though be counted as permissible as far as *Fatwā* or juristic ruling is concerned, but the blessings of Ṣalāh will be reduced to the measure of shortcoming in observing it - and in some situations one may be totally deprived of these blessings.

The Fifth Attribute: Spending in the Way of Allah

The fifth attribute of a believer, as stated in the verse, is that they spend in the way of Allah out of what Allah has provided them with. This 'spending in the way of Allah' is general. It is inclusive of all charitable spendings (*Ṣadaqāt* and *Khairāt*), endowments (*Waqf*) and gifts and grants to relatives. Also included under this category are Islamic legal obligations such as *Zakāh* and the *Ṣadaqatul-Fiṭr*, and voluntary charities, donations and contributions (*Nafl Ṣadaqāt* and *Tabarru'āt*) as well as any financial assistance amiably provided to guests, friends and respected elders.

After describing these five virtues of the model believer, it was

said: **أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا** (Those are the believers in reality) - that is, they are the same, outwardly and inwardly, they say what is there in their heart, otherwise, there are those who say: **أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ** (I testify that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah) which is only verbal as far as it goes. Their hearts do not throb with belief in the Oneness of Allah, nor do they have the passion for obedience to His prophet. What they do contradicts what they say. There is a hint in the verse which points out that every truth has its reality and unless you get to that reality, you cannot arrive at the truth.

Someone asked the famous Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: 'O Abū Sa'īd, are you a believer?' He said: 'Brother, there are two kinds of 'Imān (faith). If you are asking whether or not I am a believer in Allah Ta'ālā and His angels, Books and Messengers, and in Paradise and Hell, and in the accounting and retribution of the Last Day, then, my answer is: Of course, I am a believer. And if you are asking whether or not I am the perfect believer mentioned in the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, then, I just do not know whether or not I am one of those. The verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl referred to here are the same verses the discussion of which is before you right now.

After having described the attributes and marks of true believers in the verses cited above, it was said: **لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ** (For them there are high ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness, and dignified provision).

Promised here are three things: (1) high ranks, (2) forgiveness and (3) dignified provision.

According to Tafsīr Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ, the attributes of true Muslims mentioned in the previous verses are of three kinds: (1) Those which relate to one's heart, the inward human dimension, such as, belief in Allah, fear of Allah and trust in Allah. (2) Those which relate to physical deeds, such as, Ṣalāh etc., and (3) Those which relate to one's wealth, such as, spending in the way of Allah.

Counter-poised against these three kinds, three rewards have been mentioned. High ranks have been set against inward and spiritual attributes; forgiveness has been placed against deeds which are

related to outward human physique, like Ṣalāh and Ṣawm. Ṣalāh, as in Ḥadīth, becomes the *Kaffārah* (expiation) of sins. Finally, 'dignified provision' has been set against spending in the way of Allah, that is, one would get what is much better and much more than what one has spent in the mortal life.

Verses 5 - 6

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ مَرَوَّانَ قَرِيبًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
لَكَرْهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا
يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

It is like when your Lord made you leave your home for the sake of truth, while a group from the believers were averse to it; [5] they were disputing with you about the truth after it became clear, as if they were being driven to a death being seen by them. [6]

Commentary

It has already been stated at the beginning of the Sūrah that most of the subjects taken up in Sūrah Al-Anfāl relate to the retribution and punishment which visited the disbelievers and polytheists, and to the favour shown and reward given to Muslims. Also, described there as a corollary are injunctions which provide for both parties necessary lessons and advices. Out of what had transpired between them, the first and the most important event was that of the battle of Badr in which the polytheists were defeated, suffering heavy losses in men and materials, despite the support of military hardware, numbers and strength at their disposal - and Muslims were blessed with a great victory despite their overall lack of men and materials. Beginning from the verse cited above, there appears in this Sūrah a detailed description of the battle of Badr.

The Battle of Badr : A Detailed Description

The first verse mentions that some Muslims did not like to take the risk of initiating and advancing for Jihād on the occasion of Badr. But, when Allah Ta'ālā commanded the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to initiate the Jihād through His special decree, those who had disliked the idea came along with him. The phraseology of the Qur'an

employed to state this situation is worth consideration from many angles.

First of all, the verse begins with: **كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ** (It is like when your Lord made you leave ...). Here the word: **كَمَا** (*kamā*) is a word used for comparison. Now, the point is what is being compared here, and with what? Commentators have given various interpretations possible here. Abū Ḥayyān has reported fifteen such statements. Out of these, three are more likely as probable:

1. The simile aims to state that the way the Companions had encountered some mutual difference at the time of the distribution of spoils obtained from the battle of Badr, then, they all obeyed the command of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم under Divine decree, and its blessings and good results became manifest before them - similarly, at the beginning of this Jihād, there was an expression of dislike from some people, then, it was under Divine decree that everyone obeyed and the beneficial outcome and superb rewards it brought in its wake were witnessed by everyone openly. This interpretation is credited to Farra' and al-Mubarrad (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ). Maulānā Ashraf A'ālī Thānavī has preferred the same view in Tafsīr Bayān al-Qur'ān.

2. The second probable interpretation is that a promise of 'high ranks, forgiveness and dignified provision' in the Hereafter was made for true believers in previous verses (4). In these verses, the fact of this promise being certain was described in a manner which pointed out that - though the promise due to be fulfilled in the Hereafter is not yet openly visible for eyes to see, but the promise of Divine help and victory does stand fulfilled in the case of the battle of Badr all too manifestly. So, take your lesson from here and be certain that the way this promise has been fulfilled right here in this mortal world, so it shall be with the promise of the Hereafter - that too shall come to be definitely fulfilled. (Tafsīr al-Qurtubī with reference to Al-Naḥḥās)

3. The third probability is what Abū Ḥayyān states after having reported fifteen interpretative positions taken by commentators. He says: I was not comfortable with any of these positions. One night, pondering over this verse, I went to sleep. Then, I saw in a dream that I am going somewhere and there is a person with me. I am discussing this verse with him and I am telling him that I have never faced a

difficulty similar to what I have faced in the case of the words of this verse. It seems that there is an elision of some word here. Then, all of a sudden, right there within the dream sequence, it transpired into my heart that the elision here is that of the word: نَصَرَكَ (*naṣaraka* : He helped you). This I liked and so did the other person I was talking to in the dream. When I woke up, I thought about it. My difficulty was all gone since, in this situation, the word: *'kamā* has not been used for comparison, instead, it has been used for the statement of cause. Thus, the verse comes to mean that the cause of the very special help and support given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by Almighty Allah on the occasion of the battle of Badr was that he did what he did in this Jihād, not by some wish or discretion of his own, but by remaining obedient to the Divine Command exclusively. It was under His Command that he left his home and what happened thereafter should have happened precisely as it did - and it always does - that Divine support accompanies such a person.

Nevertheless, in this sentence of the verse, all these three meanings are probable and sound. Next, let us consider why the Holy Qur'ān has elected not to mention that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came out for this Jihād on his own. Instead of that, the text states: 'your Lord made you leave.' Embedded here is a hint towards the perfect servitude and obedience of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. It signifies that his act is, in reality, the act of God which issues forth from the parts of his body - as it appears in an Ḥadīth al-Qudsī wherein the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is reported to have said: When a servant of Allah is blessed with nearness to Allah through obedience and servitude, Allah says about him (or her): 'I become his eye. What he sees, he sees through Me. I become his ears. What he hears, he hears through Me. I become his hands and feet. Whomsoever he grips, he overpowers through Me and towards whomsoever he walks, he walks through Me.' The essential outcome is that a very special help and support from the most exalted Allah accompanies him all along. It means that the acts which obviously seem to issue forth from his eyes and ears or hands and feet are, in reality, the workings of the power of Allah.

To sum up, it is by the use of the word: أَخْرَجَكَ (*akhrajaka* : made you

leave), a clear indication has been given that the act of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in coming out for Jihād was really the act of God which made him leave, though manifested through his deed.

Also worth noticing here is that the text chooses to say: أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ (your Lord made you leave) which mentions Allah Almighty with His attribute of being the *Rabb*, the Nurturer and Sustainer of all. This points out to the fact that the act of making him leave for this Jihād was undertaken as required by the majesty of the Supreme Nurturer and Sustainer and in the interest of teaching and training His prophet and the Muslim community through him. The reason is that, through this arrangement, the oppressed and subdued Muslims were to be made victorious and the arrogant and unjust disbelievers were to be subjected to their first taste of punishment.

The next phrase: مِنْ بَيْتِكَ means 'from your home.' The sense of the sentence is: 'Your Lord made you leave your home.' According to the majority of commentators, this 'home' means the home in Madinah, or the fair city of Madinah itself where he came to live after Hijrah - for the event of Badr took place during the second year of Hijrah. Then, by adding the expression: بِالْحَقِّ (*bil-haqq*) translated as: 'for the sake of truth,' it has been made very clear that the entire action has been initiated to see that truth prevails and the false stands frustrated. Thus, also established here is that this action has not been triggered because of hunger of land or anger of monarch, as customary with other states.

At the conclusion of the verse, it was said: وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكُرْهُوْنَ (while a group from the believers were averse to it). The sense is that a group from among the Muslims took the idea of this Jihād to be burdensome and unpleasant. How and why the noble Companions came across this unpleasant situation is something which needs to be understood. In fact, not only to understand the present statement but to fully understand verses which will soon follow, it is appropriate to first find out the initial circumstances and causes of the battle of Badr. So, let us first go to what happened at the battle of Badr.

According to the report of the event as narrated by Ibn 'Uqbah and Ibn 'Amīr, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم heard the news in Madīnah that Abū Sufyān was on his way to Makkah al-Mu'azzamah with a

trading caravan carrying merchandise from Syria and that all Quraysh tribes of Makkah were partners in this business venture. According to the statement of Ibn 'Uqbah, there was no Quraysh man or woman in Makkah who did not hold a share in this venture. If someone had even one *mithqal* (approximately 4.50 gr.) of gold, he or she had still taken a share in it. As for the total invested capital of this trade caravan, it was fifty thousand *dīnārs* - as reported by Ibn 'Uqbah. *Dīnār* is a gold coin which weighs approximately 4.50 grams. According to current (1970) market rates for gold, it is equal to Rupees fifty two and the value of the total capital of the caravan comes to Rupees twenty six *lakhs*. Let us bear in mind that these rupees are not what we know them to be now. Instead, they are twenty six *lakhs*¹ which belong to a period 1400 years behind us - which, it goes without saying, had value and strength of its own, much higher than twenty six *crores*² of our time. It is interesting to note that seventy strong youngmen and their chiefs accompanied this trade caravan to manage the security and business concerns of the enterprise. This tells us that this trade caravan was, in real terms, a trading corporation of the Quraysh of Makkah.

On the authority of narrations from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه and others, Al-Baghawī reports that there were forty Quraysh chiefs among the mounted force accompanying the caravan, with 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ and Mukhramah ibn Nawfal being noteworthy among them. Then, it is also established that the strongest base of power the Quraysh had was no other but this very trading activity and the financial support of the capital which backed it. In fact, this was their seemingly innocent weapon with which they had harassed and compelled the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to leave Makkah. In this background, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came to know about the return of this trading caravan after their visit to Syria, it occurred to him that this was the time to confront the caravan and break the main source of strength the Quraysh had. He consulted his Companions. But, these were the days of Ramaḍān. They had made no battle plans in advance. So, some of them supported the idea readily and courageously, but some others were a little hesitant. Under this situation, he too did not make partic-

1. \$ 48,148

2. \$ 4,81,481

ipation in this Jihād compulsory for all. Instead, he ordered that those who have a ride should go with him. At that time, there were many people who stayed behind unable to go on Jihād. As for those who wanted to go, their rides were in the adjoining villages. They sought permission to go and bring their rides before they could go with him. But, there was not much time to wait. Therefore, the order given was that only those who have their rides with them and do wish to go on Jihād should get ready to go. There was no time left to summon rides from outside. Therefore, only a few participants who were ready to go could be assembled together. As for those who did not intend to go from the very outset, that too was caused by the absence of a general call for Jihād. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had not made participation in this Jihād obligatory on everyone. Then, people thought that they were to handle a trade caravan, not an army which could need a matching force of fighters. Therefore, a fairly large number of the Companions did not take part in this Jihād.

After reaching Bi'r Suqya, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ordered Qays ibn Ṣa'sa'ah رضى الله عنه to count the number of *mujahidīn* with him. He counted and told him that they were three hundred and thirteen. Hearing that, he was delighted. He said, 'This is the number of the companions of Ṭālūt.¹ Therefore, this is a good omen, that of victory.' The noble Companions had a total of seventy camels with them. There was one camel for every three of them. They would ride turn by turn. This applied to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as well. Besides him, there were two other riding partners in the one camel allotted to them. They were Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه and Sayyidnā 'Alī رضى الله عنه. When came his turn to walk, they would submit: 'You ride. We shall do the walking for you.' The reply he gave was - as it would be from the one created to be mercy for all creation: 'Neither are you stronger than me, nor am I needfree of the reward of the Hereafter that I let you have the chance of earning a little *thawāb* for myself!' Therefore, when it was his turn to walk, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم too used to walk.

On the other hand, someone reached as far as 'Ain al-Zarqā', a well-known place in Syria and passed on information to Abū Sufyān,

1. An Israeli King (Saul). See for details v.1, p. 627, 628

the leader of the trade caravan, that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is waiting for the caravan and will definitely come after them. Abū Sufyān made necessary precautionary arrangements to meet the threat. When this caravan entered Ḥijāz, he picked up an intelligent and effecient agent known as Ḍamḍam (ضمضم) ibn ‘Umar, gave him 20 *mithqāl* of gold (about 90 grams) as his wages, and made him agree to rush to Makkah on a speedy camel, and tell them about the danger the caravan apprehended from the companions of the Prophet of Islam.

To proclaim the danger, Ḍamḍam ibn ‘Umar followed the particular custom of that time, cut off the ears and the nose of his she-camel, tore off his shirt from the front and the back and placed the camel-litter or seat upside down on the back of the camel. These signs served as danger bells during those days. When he entered Makkah in that style, the entire city was electrified. Everyone from the Quraysh was ready to put up a defence. Those who could go out to fight went out personally and those who were unable to do so for some reason, they arranged for someone to go and fight in their behalf. Thus, it was within three days that they had an armed force with necessary support ready to march.

When they noticed someone hesitating from participating in this battle, they suspected them, taking them to be pro-Muslim. Therefore, they particularly forced such people to come out and fight. There were others who professed Islam openly but were unable to migrate due to their personal compulsions. Having no choice, they had just stayed out in Makkah. These people too - as well as anyone from the family of Banū Hāshim about whom it was suspected that he had his sympathies with Muslims - they were all cornered and goaded to come out for this fight. Right there among these helpless people, there was Sayyidnā ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه, the uncle of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and the two sons of Abū Ṭalīb namely Ṭalīb and ‘Aqīl also.

Thus, this Makkan army which had one thousand armed men, two hundred horses, six hundred coats of mail, female war-song chanters and their drums marched out to Badr. On every stage of their journey, ten camels were slaughtered to feed them.

On the other side, it was on Saturday, the 12th of Ramaḍān that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم moved out of Madinah with prepara-

tions good enough to confront a trade caravan. After covering several stages, when he reached close to Badr, he sent an advance reconnaissance party of two men to gather information about the caravan of Abū Sufyān. (Maḏharī)

The informers came back with the report that Abū Sufyān's caravan being aware of the coming of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in hot pursuit after them had passed by keeping close to the sea shore, and that an army of one thousand men was coming from Makkah to give cover to the caravan and fight the Muslims off. (Ibn Kathīr)

As obvious, this information changed all plans as projected. Given the gravity of the situation, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم went into consultation with his Companions to determine whether or not they have to fight against this advancing army. Sayyidnā Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضى الله عنه and some other Companions submitted that they do not have the necessary force to fight against them, nor have they come out there for that purpose. Thereupon, Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه rose and pledged his obedience to whatever the Messenger of Allah decided. Then, rose Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه pledging his obedience to him and his readiness for Jihād in the same spirit. Finally, it was Sayyidnā Miqdād رضى الله عنه who stood up and said:

'*Yā Rasūl Allah!* Go by the command of Allah you have been given and enforce it. We are with you. By Allah, we shall never say to you what was said to Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام by the Banī Isrā'īl: *كَأُذْهِبَ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ نَفَاتِلًا إِنَّا هُنَا نَعْبُدُونَ* (Go, you and your Lord, and fight. As for us, we are sitting right here - 5:24). By the Being that has sent you with the true faith, if you were to take us as far as Bark al-Ghamad in Ethiopia, we shall follow you to fight there.'

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was very pleased. He made prayers for them. But, an expression of support was yet to come from the Anṣār which seemed to point out to the probability that the pledge of help and support given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by the Anṣār of Madīnah was limited to and valid within the city of Madīnah, and that they were not bound to extend their support for areas outside Madīnah. Therefore, he addressed the gathering once again asking them to advise him whether or not he should take the initiative in this

Jihād. This address was beamed at the Anṣār. Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh al-Anṣārī رضى الله عنه got the point and asked him: 'Yā Rasūl Allah! Are you asking us?' He said: 'Yes.' Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh then submitted:

'Yā Rasūl Allah! We have believed in you and we have testified that everything you say is all true, and we have given solemn pledges to you that we shall obey you under all conditions. Therefore, enforce whatever command you have been given by Allah Ta'ālā. By the Being that has sent you with the true faith, if you take us into the sea, we shall go with you into the sea and no one from among us shall lag behind you. It is all right for us if you were to take us as soon as tomorrow and throw us against the enemy. We strongly hope that Allah Ta'ālā will have you witness conditions generated by our deeds, conditions which would become the delight of your eyes. Take us wherever you wish in the name of Allah.'

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was pleased with the response and ordered the group of Mujāhidin to march forward with the name of Allah. And to them he gave the good news that Allah Ta'ālā has promised him that they shall overcome one of the two groups. The two groups mentioned here mean: One, the trade caravan of Abū Sufyān; and the other, this army coming from Makkah. Then, he said: 'By Allah, it is as if I am seeing the killing fields of disbelievers with my own eyes.' (This whole event has been taken from Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr and Maḥzarī)

Explanation of Verses in the Light of the Details of the Event

After having heard the details of the event, let us go back to the verses cited above. That it has been said in the first verse (5): *وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَرِهُوا* (while a group from the believers was averse to this Jihād) is actually a hint towards the state of mind which some noble Companions were in while being consulted on the advisability of waging Jihād and to which they seemed to be averse or not courageous enough to undertake it.

Then, the same event has been alluded to in the second verse (6): *يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ* (they were disputing with you about the truth after it became clear, as if they were being driven to a death being seen by them).

Though the noble Companions had not disobeyed any command given to them - in fact, what they had done was a certain expression of their weakness and lack of courage as part of their response when consulted. But, even such expression of personal opinion coming from the Companions of the Messengers of Allah when juxtaposed with the high station they were blessed with was unwelcome in the sight of Allah Ta'ālā. Therefore, it was set forth in words which spell out displeasure.

Verses 7 - 10

وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشَّوْكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾ لِيُحِقَّ الْحَقَّ وَيُبْطِلَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾ إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُم بِآلِفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

And when Allah was promising you that one of the two groups was for you, and you were wishing that the unarmed one be for you. And Allah wanted to establish the truth through His words and to cut off the very root of the disbelievers, [7] so that He proves the truth to be true and falsehood to be false, even to the dislike of the sinners. [8]

When you were calling your Lord for help, so He responded to you (saying): "I am going to support you with one thousand of the angels, one following the other." [9]

And Allah has made it (the promise) just to give you a good news, and so that your hearts might be at rest thereby. And the help is from none but Allah. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise. [10]

Commentary

The verses cited above describe the event of Badr and point out to

blessings which descended upon Muslims in the form of Divine help and support during the Battle.

In the first (7) and the second (8) verses, it has been stated that at the time the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the noble Companions got the information that a virtual army of the Quraysh has already left Makkah to give a security cover to their trade caravan, Muslims found that they now have two groups to deal with. One of the two was the trade caravan which has been called: عير (*īr*) in relevant narrations. The other one was this very armed group which had dashed out from Makkah and which has been called: نفير (*naḥīr*). According to the statement given in the verse, that was the time when Allah Ta'ālā had made a promise to His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم - and to all Muslims through him - to the effect that they will totally overcome one of the two groups so much so that they would be able to deal with it as they wished.

Now, it is obvious that overcoming a trade caravan was easy and danger-free while dealing with an armed force was fraught with all sorts of difficulties and dangers. Therefore, after hearing this seemingly ambiguous promise, it occurred to many Companions, that it would be convenient if the Divine promise, made to Muslims that they would overcome one of the two groups, were to be about the group which was simply an unarmed trading caravan. But, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and many of his leading Companions intended otherwise as Divinely guided and settled for overcoming an armed force as the better choice.

In this verse, Muslims seeking to overcome an unarmed group have been warned that they, on their part, preferred to overcome an unarmed trading caravan in view of their tilt towards personal convenience and a danger-free option. But, Allah Ta'ālā intended it to be otherwise so that the real objective of Islām stands achieved, that is, truth gets to be established as the ultimate truth and the very root of disbelievers is cut off. It is obvious that this objective could be achieved only when the confrontation is against an armed force and Muslims overwhelm and overpower them.

In substance, what Muslims are being chastised for is their choice of an option which was laced with timidity, desire to relax, and was a

thing of temporal benefit. Contrary to that, the intention made by Allah Ta'ālā was based on high determination, great objectives and benefits which were perfect and eternal. Then, in the second verse (8), it was further clarified by saying that there was nothing outside the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā. If He had so willed, Muslims would have triumphed over the trading caravan, but He deemed it compatible with the station and majesty of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and his noble Companions رضى الله عنهم اجمعين that the confrontation should be against the armed force which should result in their conquest, so that it becomes all too clear that truth is, after all, the truth and that falsehood is, after all, nothing but falsehood.

Noteworthy at this point is the question that Allah Ta'ālā is All-Knowing, All-Aware and certainly cognizant of the beginning and the end of everything. What then was the expedient consideration behind this ambiguous promise - that Muslims will overcome any one of the two groups? It seems possible that He could have pinpointed one group precisely and said that such and such group will be overtaken.

The reason for this ambiguity - and Allah knows best - seems to be that this was designed to be a test of the noble Companions to determine whether they opt for the easy, or the difficult. Then, this was part of their moral training as well - through which they were taught a lesson in high determination, in the struggle for great objectives and in how not to be scared of impending dangers.

Described in the third (9) and fourth (10) verses is what happened after Muslims stood combat ready against their armed opponents. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saw that he has only three hundred and thirteen Companions by his side - and that too being mostly unarmed - and arrayed against them there was an armed force composed of one thousand strong men, then, he raised his hands of prayer before Allah *Jalla thana'uh* seeking his help and support. As he prayed, the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all, said: 'Āmīn' (Amen : So be it). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه has reported the words of this *du'ā* (prayer) made by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as given below in its translation:

"O Allah, let the promise You have made to me come true now. O Allah, if this modest group of Muslims were to perish,

then, on Your earth, there shall remain no one to worship You. (because, the earth is full of *kufr* and *shirk* and left here are these few Muslims who worship Allah as due)."

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم kept busy with his *du'a*, beseeching earnestly and plaintively so much so that the sheet wrap around his shoulders slid down. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه stepped forward and put the sheet back on his blessed body and said to him: 'Ya Rasūl Allah, please worry no more. Allah Ta'ālā will surely respond to your prayer and fulfill His promise.'

This is the event referred to in the opening statement: اِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ (when you were calling your Lord for help) of verse 9. It means that 'worth remembering is the time when you were calling your Lord and appealing for His help and support.' This appeal for help was though from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in fact but, since all Companions by his side were saying 'Āmīn' (So be it), therefore, the statement was attributed to the whole group.

Immediately after, there appears the statement which describes how this prayer has been answered. The words are: فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ اَتَىٰ مُدْكُم بِالْفِ مِنْ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ (so he responded to you [saying]: 'I am going to support you with one thousand of the angels, one following the other' - 9)

The unmatched power with which Allah Ta'ālā has blessed angels can be gauged from the event which transpired at the time the part of earth on which the people of Sayyidnā Lūṭ صلى الله عليه وسلم lived was overturned upside down. This was done by Angel Jibra'īl with just one flick of his feather. So, there was no need to send such a large number of angels to participate in the combat - even one would have been more than enough. But, Allah Ta'ālā knows the nature of His servants as they also get impressed with numbers. Therefore, the promise of sending angels was kept synchronized with the numbers of the adversary in the combat, so that their hearts are put at rest fully and comprehensively.

The fourth verse (10) restates this aspect explicitly by saying: وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ اِلَّا بُشْرٰى وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ It means: 'Allah has done it only to give you glad tidings and so that your hearts might be at rest thereby.'

The number of angels sent to support Muslims in the battle of

Badr has been given as one thousand at this place, while in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān (3: 124) the number mentioned is three thousand and five thousand. The reason for this lies in three different promises made under different circumstances. The first promise was that of one thousand angels, the reason for which was the prayer of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the supporting plaint of common Muslims with him. The second promise of three thousand angels which appears first in Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān was made at a time when Muslims heard about the additional forces coming to join the Quraysh army. It has been reported in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī as based on a narration of Al-Sha'bī from Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn al-Mundhir and others that on the day of the battle of Badr when Muslims heard that Kurz ibn Jābir Muḥārībī was coming with additional armed support for the disbelievers, they were disturbed and agitated. Thereupon, the verse of 'Al-'Imrān: أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمْدِدَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ "Shall it not suffice you that your Lord should help you with three thousand of the angels sent down (for you)?" - 3:124) was revealed and referred to wherein is the promise of sending a force of three thousand angels from the heavens in order to support believers.

As for the third promise of five thousand, it was made subject to the condition that should the enemy launch a sudden offensive, a supporting force of five thousand angels will be sent down. That promise appears in the verse which follows verse 124 of Sūrah 'Al-'Imrān (3) cited immediately above. Given here are the words in which it has been mentioned:

بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّنْ فُورِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ
مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ

"Why not? If you stay patient and fear Allah and they come upon you even in this heat of theirs, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand of the angels having distinct marks"

(3:125).

Some Commentators have said that this promise had three conditions: (1) Fortitude, (2) Taqwā or fear of Allah and (3) Sudden and all-out attack by the opposing forces. Out of these, the first two conditions were already fulfilled by the noble Companions for no departure from these was witnessed in this battlefield from the beginning to the end.

But, what did not take place was the third condition of a sudden attack. Therefore, things did not reach the point where the army of five thousand angels was to be inducted.

So, this matter remained revolving between one and three thousand which also lends to the probability that the figure of three thousand may mean the one thousand sent earlier to which an additional force of two thousand was added and made to be three thousand - and it is also probable that these three thousand were in addition to the first one thousand.

At this stage, it is also interesting to note that the promise of sending three groups of angels in these three verses (8:9; 3:124; 3:125) mentions a quality particular to each group. In the present verse, verse 9 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, where the promise is for one thousand, the word used to describe the quality of these angels is مُرْدِفِينَ (*murdifīn*: translated here as 'one following the other'). Perhaps, the indication already given within the text is that there are others too coming behind these angels. Then, in the first verse of Sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān (3:124) quoted above, the quality of the angels has been given as: مُنْزِلِينَ (*munzalīn* : translated as 'sent down [for you]'). The sense is that these angels will be made to descend from the heavens. In this, there is a hint towards the special arrangement made in this connection - that the angels already present on the earth will not be employed for this mission, instead of which, it will be by special appointment and despatch that these angels will be sent down from the heavens to fulfill the assignment they have been sent to carry out. After that, we have the second verse (3:125) of Sūrah 'Āl-'Imrān where the figure of five thousand has been mentioned. There, the quality of the angels has been stated to be: مُسَوِّمِينَ (*musawwimīn*: translated as 'having distinct marks') that is, they shall be appearing in a particular dress and distinctive signs and marks. This is corroborated by Ḥadīth narrations which report that the headgear of angels that descended during the battle of Badr was white and that of the angels who were sent down to help believers in the battle of Ḥunayn was red.

Finally, towards the end of the verse (10), it was said: وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (And the help is from none but Allah. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise). Here, Muslims have been warned that all help, what-

ever and from wherever it may be, open or secret, is from Allah Ta'ālā alone and issues forth through His power and control only. The help and support of angels is also subject to nothing but His command. Therefore, all believers must look up to none but the most pristine Being of Allah who is One and with Whom there is no partner or associate - because, He is the possessor of Power and Wisdom at its greatest.

Verses 11 - 14

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسُ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رَجَزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾ إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَلِكَةِ أَنْتَنِي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبَّثُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَالِقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٣﴾ ذَلِكَ فَذُوقُوا وَآَنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾

When He covered you with drowsiness, as tranquility (descending) from Him and sent down upon you water from the heavens, so that He might purify you with it, and remove from you the impurity of Satan, and so that He might strengthen your hearts and make (your) feet firm therewith. [11]

When your Lord revealed to the angels: "I am with you. So, make those who believe firm. I shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. So, strike over the necks, and smite them (so as to even reach) every finger-joint of theirs." [12]

That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger. And whoever becomes hostile to Allah and His Messenger, then, Allah is severe at punishment. [13] That is what you have to taste and for the disbelievers there is the punishment of the Fire. [14]

Commentary

Being enumerated from the very beginning are blessings of Allah Ta'ālā which descended upon His obedient servants. The events of the battle of Badr are parts of the same chain. Out of the many blessings bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā during the battle of Badr, the very first blessing is the bringing out of Muslims for this Jihād, which finds mention in: كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ (When your Lord made you leave your home - 5). The second blessing is the promise of providing the support of angels which has been made in: إِذْ يَبْعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ (And when Allah was promising you - 7). The third blessing is the answer to the prayer made and the fulfillment of the promise of support given, which has been mentioned in: إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ (When you were calling your Lord for help - 9). The fourth blessing finds its description in the first of the set of four verses cited immediately above (11). Mentioned here are two blessings for the believers: (1) The removal of anxiety and fatigue through a mass descension of drowsiness; and (2) the provision of water for them through rains which also made the battlefield smooth for them and muddy for the enemy.

According to the details of what happened there, when this first ever confrontation between *kufr* (disbelief, infidelity) and Islām turned into a certain battle, the army of the disbelievers of Makkah had already reached and set up camp at a place which was located on high grounds with water close to them. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Companions arrived at that place, the lower part of valley fell to their lot. The Holy Qur'an has portrayed the lay-out of this battlefield in verse 42 of this very Sūrah by saying: إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى (When you were on the nearest cliff, and they were on the farthest one - 8:42) a detailed description of which shall appear later.

The spot reaching where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had first camped was considered strategically inappropriate by Sayyidnā Ḥubāb ibn al-Mundhir رضى الله عنه who knew this territory well. Keeping this in view, he respectfully inquired: 'Yā Rasūlallah! Does this place you have selected happen to be in compliance to a command from Allah Ta'ālā in which we have no say, or it has been taken to as simply based on opinion and expedience?' He said: 'No, this is not something Divinely ordained. This can be changed or re-located.' After that, Sayy-

idnā Ḥubāb ibn al-Mundhir submitted: 'If so, it is better to move forward from this spot, reach a water source close to the armed force of Makkan chiefs and take it over. We are sure to have an abundant supply of water there.' The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم accepted his proposal, marched ahead, took over the spot with water, had a water tank built there and saw to it that an ample supply of water has been stored in it.

After he had taken care of this strategic need, Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه said: "Yā Rasūlallāh! We would like to put up a shaded structure for you at a secure place where you could stay and where your riding animals could be nearby you. The plan behind this arrangement is that we shall wage our Jihād against the enemy and if Allah were to bless us with victory, then, our plan is well-served for this is what we like for you. But, God forbid, should things turn out otherwise, then, you would be in a position to ride your camel and go back to join the rest of your Companions left behind in Madīnah - because, I am strongly inclined to believe that they are no less than us in terms of sacrifice for the cause and love for you. In fact, if they had any idea of the eventuality that you will have to fight against this armed force, then, none of them would have chosen to stay behind. I am sure when you are back in Madīnah, they will continue to be your companions in the mission.' On this gallant and noble offer, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم prayed for them. So, a ragtag awning of some modest sort was set up for him in which there was no one but he himself and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه. Sayyidnā Mu'adh رضى الله عنه, sword in hand, stood on the door, guarding.

This was the first night of confrontation. A bunch of three hundred and thirteen mostly unarmed souls stood against a thousand strong armed force, being three times more in numbers. They had already occupied the better spot of the battlefield. The lower part of the valley which was sandy and difficult to move around had fallen to the lot of Muslims. Everyone was concerned. Anxiety was natural. The Satan also started instigating some people: Here you are, claiming to be on the path of truth and at a time so crucial you are busy making Tahajjud prayers rather than go and take some rest. But, cast a look at the ground reality - you will see your enemy casting his heavy

shadows on you being far superior to you from all angles. Under these conditions, Allah Ta'ālā cast a unique kind of drowsiness on Muslims which made every Muslim, whether or not he intended to sleep, go to sleep compulsively.

Hafīz al-Ḥadīth, Abū Ya'lā reports that Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضى الله عنه said: On that night of the battle of Badr, there remained no one from among us who did not go to sleep. Only the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم remained awake throughout the night and kept busy with the Ṣalāh of Tahajjud right through dawn.

Quoting the Ṣaḥīḥ, Ibn Kathīr reports that, on that night, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was busy with the Ṣalāh of Tahajjud in his 'Arīsh, the twig-roofed hutment set up for him, he too was somewhat affected by drowsiness. But, immediately coming out of it with a smile, he said: "O Abū Bakr, here comes good news for you. This is Jibra'īl عليه السلام standing near the cliff" and saying this, he walked out of the hutment reciting the verse which follows: سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ (Soon the gathered group of the enemy will be defeated and they will turn [their] backs - 54:45). According to some narrations, when he came out, he pointed towards various spots and said: 'This is the spot where Abū Jahl will be killed, and this is for so and so, and this is for so and so.' Then, events turned out to be precisely as he had indicated. (Tafsīr Mazharī)

And as it happened during the battle of Badr where Allah Ta'ālā cast a particular kind of drowsiness on all Companions of the Prophet in order to remove their fatigue and tension, so it did during the battle of 'Uḥud.

Sufyān al-Thawrī رحمه الله عليه reports on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه that sleep during the state of war is a sign of peace and tranquility from Allah Ta'ālā - and sleep during the state of Ṣalāh is from the Satan. (Ibn Kathīr)

The second blessing Muslims received that night was that rains came and totally overturned all battle plans. The spot occupied by the Quraysh army was hit by heavy rains which made it muddy and difficult to walk through. Then, the spot where the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Companions were camped was sandy and difficult to walk

through at the very outset. When rains came, this spot received the lighter part of it which helped firm up the sandy surface making the ground nice and easy to walk on.

The first of the four verses appearing above (11) mentions these very two blessings - sleep and rain - which, by upturning the blueprint of the battlefield, washed off the Satanic scruples which were bothering some weak combatants, scruples like: 'Here we are, on the side of truth, yet appear to be all subdued and overshadowed while there stands our enemy who is, despite being on the side of falsehood, basking in the sunshine of power, majesty and confidence!'

So, Muslims are being told in this verse to remember the time when Allah was covering them up with drowsiness to make tranquility from Him descend upon them, and He was sending down rains upon them so that He purifies them with that water - and removes from them the impurity of Satanic instigations and scruples, and strengthens their hearts, and makes their feet firm.

Mentioned in the second verse (12) is the fifth blessing which was beamed at Muslims in this battlefield of Badr. That came through the command addressed to the angels sent by Allah Ta'ālā to help Muslims, in which He said: 'I am with you. So, you make believers firm. I am going to cast terror into the hearts of disbelievers. So, strike over their necks, and smite them [so as to even reach] every finger-joint of theirs.'

Here, the angels have been charged with two duties: (1) That they should encourage, exhort and empower Muslims with steadfastness which can be done either by appearing on the battlefield, increase their group strength and participate with them in fighting, or also by using their unobserved ability to dispose matters (*taṣarruf*) they would make the hearts of Muslims firm and empower them to operate more effectively. (2) The second duty entrusted with them was that the angels should themselves engage in fighting and attack disbelievers. From this verse (at least for the purpose on hand), it is apparent that the angels did both. They acted upon the hearts of Muslims, increased their courage and strength, and took part in the actual fighting as well. This is also confirmed by some Ḥadīth narrations which have been reported in details in Tafsīr Al-Durr Al-Manthūr and Maḥzarī

and where eye witnesses to the participation of angels in actual fighting have been documented on the authority of the noble Ṣaḥābah.

In the third verse (13), it was said that the reason for whatever happened during this confrontation between *kufr* and Islam was that those disbelievers were hostile to Allah and His Messenger and whoever becomes hostile to Allah and His Messenger, then, for him the punishment of Allah is customarily severe. This tells us that, on the one hand, Muslims were the blessed ones in the battle of Badr for victory became theirs. On the other hand, by sending punishment on disbelievers through Muslims, they were chastised a little for their evil doings - while, the much heavier punishment awaits them in the Hereafter - both of which have been described in the fourth verse (14) by saying: *ذَلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ* (That is what you have to taste, and for the disbelievers there is the punishment of the Fire).

In other words, what is being said here is: This is a little punishment from Us. So, taste it and better realize that, after this, the punishment of the fire of Jahannam is due to come for disbelievers, a punishment which is severe, lasting and unimaginable.

Verses 15 - 19

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمْ
الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ يُولِهِمْ يُؤْمِدْ دُبْرَهُ إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ أَوْ
مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا
رَمَيْتُمْ إِذْ رَمَيْتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءٌ
حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنٌ كِيدِ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ ۖ وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ ۖ وَلَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْكُمْ فِتْنَتُكُمْ
شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ ۖ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

O those who believe, when you face the disbelievers marching to battle, then, do not turn your backs on

them. [15] And whoever turns his back on them that day, unless maneuvering for battle or turning to join a company, turns with wrath from Allah, and his abode is Jahannam and it is an evil place to return. [16]

So, you did not kill them, but Allah killed them. And you did not throw when you threw but Allah did throw, so that He may bless the believers with a good favour. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [17] Apart from that, Allah is the One who frustrates the device of the disbelievers. [18]

If you pray for victory, 'victory' has come upon you. And if you give up, it is better for you. And if you repeat, We shall repeat. And your people shall not suffice you at all, even though they are many in number; and Allah is with the believers. [19]

Commentary

Out of the verses appearing above, the first two (15-16) tell us about a military law of Islam. The word: *زحف* (*zahf*) translated here literally as 'marching to battle' denotes the confrontation and intermingling between the two armies. The sense is that once a war is on, turning back and deserting the battlefield is not permissible for Muslims.

The second verse (16) refers to an exception to this rule, and to a severe punishment for illegal deserters.

The exception covers two states: (1) *إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ* (unless maneuvering for battle,) (2) *أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِتْنَةٍ* (or turning to join a company) that is, when a war is on, turning one's back is permissible only under two conditions. Firstly, this turning back from the battlefield should simply be strategic, just to hoodwink the enemy and certainly not to bolt away from the battlefield in reality. In short, the purpose in sight should be to launch a blitzkrieg or a lightning attack on the enemy by making them complacent about what may look like a real retreat. This is the meaning of the statement: *إِلَّا مُتَحَرِّفًا لِّقِتَالٍ* (unless maneuvering for battle) because the word: *تحرف* (*taḥarruf*) is used to refer to turning away towards a certain side obliquely. (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī)

The second state of exception in which it is permissible to turn one's back from the battlefield is that one realizes the weakness of one's combating force and moves back to gather additional support

from Mujāhidīn and come back into the battle with added strength. This is what the sentence: *أَوْ مُتَحَيِّرًا إِلَىٰ فِئَةٍ* (or turning to join a company) means because the word: *تَحْيُرٌ* (*tahayyuz*) literally means to join up and *فِئَة* (*fi'ah*) signifies a group, company or force. Thus, the sense is that should one back out from the battlefield with the intention of joining up with one's group, assembling the needed fighting support and returning to attack again, then, this is permissible.

After having mentioned this exception, the text describes the punishment of those who deserted the battlefield or turned their backs illegally without being under conditions which have been granted exception. The words are: *فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِمَا يَعْصِبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمُصِيرُ* that is, the deserter and dodger of a Jihad battle only 'turns back with wrath from Allah, and his abode is Jahannam (Hell) and it is an evil place to return.'

From these two verses (15-16) comes the governing rule that, no matter how large in numbers, and superior in strength and power, the adversary may be, it is *Haram* (forbidden, unlawful) for Muslims to turn their backs from fighting them - with the exception of two conditions: (1) That this turning back is not for deserting the battlefield, instead, is a feinted move or strategic ploy, (2) and that it is with the intention to return with auxiliary forces and resume attacking afresh.

When these verses were revealed during the battle of Badr, this was the operating order of the time, that is, take on the enemy, irrespective of its numbers, strength and power, and irrespective of your own numbers and strength as compared to it, then do not turn back from the combat and run for life. This is how it was in Badr. Only three hundred and thirteen Mujāhidīn were facing one thousand, three times their number. It was later on that injunctions relaxing restrictions were revealed in verses 65 and 66 of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, now under study. In verse 65, twenty Muslims have been commanded to wage Jihad against two hundred disbelievers, and one hundred Muslims against one thousand of them. Then, in verse 66, the following law of additional relaxation was revealed:

الَّذِينَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ
يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ

Now Allah Ta'ālā has granted relief to you in view of your weakness whereby one hundred steadfast Muslims shall be able to overcome two hundred disbelievers.'

The indication given here is that Muslims are, after all, expected to overcome an adversary twice their number, therefore, it is not permissible for them to turn their backs. However, if the numerical strength of the adversary turns out to be more than twice their number, then, under such a condition, it is permissible to disengage and leave the battlefield.

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said: 'A person who fled against three did not 'flee' but one who fled against two is a deserter, that is, is answerable for a major sin.' (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī). Now, this is the injunction which holds good right through the Last Day. According to the consensus of the majority of the Muslim Ummah, and in the view of the Four Imams, the exact Islamic Legal position in this case is: Until such time the number of the adversary does not go beyond twice, it is Ḥarām to desert the battlefield, and is a major sin.

In the Ṣaḥīḥayn (Al-Bukhārī and Muslim), it has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم identified seven things as fatal for a person. He counted fleeing from the battlefield also as one of these. And the Holy Qur'an rated the early retreat of the noble Companions during the battle of Ḥunayn as a Satanic slip which confirms that it is a great sin. The actual statement of the Qur'an is: (إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ) (Satan has but made them slip - 3:155)

Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd have reported the incident of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه that once he left the battlefield, took refuge in Madīnah and presented himself before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم where he confessed to his misconduct and expressed his utter dismay and confusion on having become a sinning deserter of the battlefield. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, far from being displeased with him, rather comforted him by saying: (بل انتم العكارون وانا فتتكم) (No, you are not of those who flee from battles, instead of that, you are here to seek support after which you are to go back into the battle and attack once again, and I am, for you, the support). Here, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has made it very clear that the act of those who fled into

Madīnah for refuge is included under the exception which permits leaving the battlefield in order to assemble and bring back additional support. It was actually on the basis of the specially high degree of fear, awe and recognition of the greatness of Allah Ta'ālā which was part of his persona that Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنه was disturbed even at this maneuvered retreat as well and went to the act of presenting himself before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as if he had committed some crime.

In the third verse (17), after recounting the rest of the event which transpired at the battle of Badr, Muslims have been instructed that they should not take the defeat of many by some and of the strong by the weak in the miraculous victory of the battle of Badr to be the outcome of their own effort and deed. In fact, they should be looking towards the most sacred Being of Allah whose help and support totally re-wrote all plans in this Battle.

The details of this event mentioned in the verse have been reported by Ibn Jarīr, Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Baihaqī and others as based on narrations from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه and others.

On the day of the confrontation at Badr, says the report, when the armed force of one thousand men of Makkah entered into the valley from behind the cliff, it did not hide its contempt for Muslims being low in numbers and weak in combat fitness. And on top of it, it came waxing proud over its numbers and strength, betraying great arrogance. At that time, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم raised his hands of prayer saying: 'Yā Allah! Here come Your beliers, the Quraysh of Makkah, all proud and arrogant. The promise of victory You have made to me, let that promise be fulfilled soon.' (Rūḥ al-Bayān) Thereupon, angel Jibra'īl came and said: 'You take a handful of dust and throw it towards the army of the enemy.' He did what he was asked to do. And according to a report of Ibn Abī Ḥātim based on a narration of Ibn Zayd, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم picked up a handful of dust and pebbles thrice; the first he threw towards the right of the army, the second towards the left, and the third towards the center. The outcome was that these one to three handfuls of dust and pebbles were Divinely spread out miraculously all over them, so much so that not one man from the force was left without having received part of this dust and

these pebbles over his eyes and face. Naturally, this caused a rampage in the army. Muslims pursued them. The angels were with them, fighting and killing. (Maẓharī, Rūḥ)

Finally, some fighting men from the opposing side were killed, some were taken prisoners, the rest ran away and the battle was won by the Muslims.

This great victory was achieved by Muslims in the background which was initially full of dismay and hopelessness. So, when they returned from the battlefield, they started talking about it. The Companions got busy relating their deeds on the battlefield. Revealed thereupon was this verse: **لَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ** (So, you did not kill them, but Allah killed them -17) through which they were instructed not to wax proud over their effort and deed, for that which happened there was not simply the outcome of their personal effort and deed. In fact, it was purely and simply the fruit of the help and support given by Allah Ta'ālā - and the enemies killed at their hands were not really killed by them, rather, they were killed by Allah Ta'ālā.

Similarly, addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, it was said: **وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى** (And you did not throw when you threw, but Allah did throw). It means that the specific outcome of the act of throwing, whereby it would reach the eyes of every fighting man in the enemy force and frighten them all, was not the direct effect of 'his' throwing. It was, in fact, the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā which generated the format of this situation. To quote Rūmī for a chic poetic explanation:

ما رميت اذ رميت گفت حق کارما برکارها دارد سبق

'And you did not throw when you did,' said Allah,
'Our Act precedes all other acts.'

Certainly valuable for Muslims - more valuable than their victory in Jihād - was this instruction which disengaged their minds from means and tied it up with the master-provider of all means, and through it, saved them from falling into the trap of pride and arrogance which generally intoxicates victorious nations. After that it was said that victory and defeat are subservient to the command of Allah and that His support is with those who are obedient: **وَلِيُجِيبَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ بَلَاءٍ** (so that He may bless the believers with a good favour). It means

that Allah blessed the believers with this great victory in order to give them the best of return for their obedience and struggle. The literal meaning of the word: بَلَاءٌ (*bala'*) is test or trial. As for the test taken by Allah Ta'ālā, it sometimes comes when someone is put to distress or hardship - and there are occasions when this is done by giving someone comfort and wealth. Here, the name of *ḥasan* (good) *bala'* (trial) has been given to a test which is taken by giving comfort, wealth, support and victory to find out if people who are so blessed take it to be a favour from Allah and are grateful for it, or take it to be the outcome of their personal excellence, become proud and arrogant and undo what they did - because, there is no room for pride from anyone before Allah Ta'ālā.

In contrast to this, yet another benefit which came out of this victory has been described in the fourth verse as: ذَلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُؤِثِّرُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ (Apart from that, Allah is the One who frustrates the device of the disbelievers - 18). In other words, it can be said that Muslims were blessed with this victory for yet another reason, that is, the plans of the disbelievers should be rendered ineffective through it, something which would make them understand that Divine support is not with them - and no plan can succeed without it.

The fifth verse (19) carries an address to the defeated disbelievers from the tribe of Quraysh and refers to an event which came to pass when the Quraysh army was about to depart Makkah on their mission to confront Muslims.

According to the report of that event, when the army of Qurayshi disbelievers was ready to march against Muslims, the commander of the army, Abū Jahl and other chiefs had made earnest prayers holding the covering drapes of the Baytullah in their hands before leaving Makkah. Strange as it would seem, they did not specifically pray for their own victory. Rather, the prayer they made was in general terms and its words were:

"O Allah, let victory come to the superior-most out of the two armies, and to the better-guided out of the two groups, and to the nobler out of the two parties, and to the religion and faith which is more sublime out of the two." (Mazhari)

It is interesting that these dim-witted people were under the

impression that they were the ones higher and superior and better-guided as compared to Muslims, therefore, they surmised that the prayer they were making was in their own favour. They actually wanted that Allah would, through their prayer, give His verdict as to who was true and who was false. Thus, when they win, their victory would become the Divine verdict on their being on the side of truth.

But, they did not know that the prayer they were making was really a curse for their own selves, and that it was a supplication for the good of Muslims. After the end of the battle came, the Qur'an told them: **إِنْ تَسْتَغِيثُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ** (If you pray for victory, "victory" has come upon you) that is, 'if you are looking for a Divine verdict, that is before you - truth has triumphed and falsehood has been defeated. Then: **وَإِنْ تَنْتَهُوا فَبُخْرٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ** (if you give up it is better for you) that is, 'now is the time when, if you abandon your disbelief and hostility, it will turn out to be better for you.' And, if you still decide to revert back to your wickedness and the threat of armed aggression, then, Allah too will revert back and support Muslims: **وَإِنْ تَعْمُدُوا تَعُدُّ** (And if you repeat, We shall repeat). In that case, the consequence would be: **وَكُنْ تُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ كَثُرَتْ** (And your people shall not suffice you at all, even though they are many in number) that is, 'your numerical superiority and group strength shall be of no avail against the help and support given by Allah.' As for the help and support of Allah: **وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ** (Allah is with the believers) that is, 'how can any group or power work for you when Allah Ta'ālā, the very possessor of absolute power, is with the Muslims?'

Verses 20 - 24

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَّأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ۖ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ

اللَّهُ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

O those who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from Him while you are listening.

[20] And do not be like those who say, "We have heard" while they do not listen. [21] Surely, the worst of all animals in the sight of Allah are deaf and the dumb who do not understand. [22] And had Allah seen in them some good, He would have made them listen. And had He made them listen, they would have turned away paying no heed. [23] O those who believe, respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to what gives you life, and be sure that Allah intervenes between man and his heart, and that to Him you shall be gathered. [24]

Commentary

The event of the battle of Badr which has been described in a somewhat detailed manner in the previous verses contains many lessons in hard advice and wisdom both for those who adhere to Islam and those who stick to disbelief. These appear intermittently during the course of relevant narrations and serve as warning signals.

For example, in the previous verses, after having recounted the defeat and disgrace of the disbelievers of Makkah, it was said: **ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُّوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ** (That is because they were hostile to Allah and His Messenger - 13). It means that the disbelievers of Makkah were defeated despite their numerical and logistic strength and the real reason behind it was that they had elected to act hostile to Allah and His Messenger. In this, there lies a chastening lesson for people who bypass the most perfect power of the Creator and Master of the heavens and the earth - the power that is visible and the power that is invisible - and who opt for placing their reliance on material strengths only, or just choose to cheat their own selves by hoping and praying that the help and support of Allah will be by their side despite all their acts of disobedience to Him.

In the present verse, the other side of this very problem has been taken up by addressing Muslims. Stated briefly, the truth of the matter is that Muslims were blessed with this great victory despite their low numbers and ill-equipped fighting force only through the

help and support of Allah Almighty - and this Divine help and support is the outcome of their obedience to Allah. This obedience is what Muslims have been obligated with and to this they have to adhere firmly: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ* (O those who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger). In the sentence which follows, the same subject has been further emphasized by saying: *وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ* (and do not turn away from him while you are listening). The sense is that once you have listened to the Qur'ān, the true word of Allah, do not go about doing things against the norms of genuine obedience.

Listening denotes listening to what is the truth and it has four degrees in terms of effective response. (1) The hearer with ears simply heard some voice but neither tried to understand it, nor understood it, nor believed in or relied upon it, nor did he act accordingly. (2) He heard it through his ears all right, even understood it, but did neither believe in it nor acted accordingly. (3) He heard, he understood, even believed and trusted, but did not act accordingly. (4) He heard, he understood, he believed, he trusted - and acted accordingly as well.

It is obvious that the real purpose of listening is fully realized only through the fourth degree - which is the station of perfect believers. As for the earlier three degrees, the act of listening described there is imperfect and incomplete which, in a manner of saying, could be set aside as just not listening - as readily pointed to in the verses appearing next. The third degree mentioned above has the ingredients of hearing the truth, understanding it and believing in it, but lacks corresponding deeds. Here, the real purpose of listening is though not realized as it should be, yet belief has its own importance and can not be rejected as useless. This degree pertains to sinning Muslims. Then there is the second degree where we find only listening and understanding but no belief and no corresponding deed. This degree is that of the *munāfiqīn* (hypocrites) for they do listen to the Qur'ān, understand it too, even have a feigned claim to desired belief and deed, but the reality is that they do not believe and do what is right and due. Finally, the first degree is that of polytheists and disbelievers who listened to the message of truth and the 'āyāt of the Qur'ān with their own ears but were never motivated enough to understand and think about that.

In the verse cited above (20), the address is to Muslims who have been told that they do listen to the message of truth after all, that is, the initial requirement of listening, understanding and believing is present in their attitude as it is, but they have to do more than that. They must act, do what must be done and do it fully and faithfully. They have been asked not to do anything which would take them away from the path of obedience so that the real purpose of listening to the word of truth stands realized fully.

For added emphasis on the same subject, it was said in the second verse (21): وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَمُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ (and do not be like those who say, "we have heard" while they do not listen). Meant here are common disbelievers who claim to be listening but make no such claim about believing. Also meant here are the hypocrites who go beyond the elementary listening which they already do. In fact, they also claim to understand what that they listen to and to believe in it as well. But, the truth of the matter is that they both remain deprived of genuine deliberation and correct understanding. Therefore, their listening falls under the category of not listening. So, Muslims have been forbidden from becoming like them.

The third verse (22) strongly condemns those who do not listen to what is the truth thoughtfully and let it go unaccepted. The Qur'ān has declared such people to be worse than animals. The words used are: إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (Surely, the worst of all animals in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb who do not understand).

The word: دواب (*dawābb*) is the plural form of: ذئب (*dābbah*). Literally, everything that walks on the earth is called '*dābbah*.' But, in usage, only quadruped animals are called '*dābbah*.' So, the sense of the verse is that the worst quadrupeds in the sight of Allah are the ones deaf against listening to the truth and dumb when it comes to accepting it. Even someone deaf and dumb could, if he has the least fund of reason in him, make himself understood by simple gestures in a two-way communication. But, these people are not only deaf and dumb, they are short on reason also. It is obvious that for a person, who is deaf, dumb; and devoid of reason too, the lines of communication shall remain blocked and there will be no way they would understand or be made to understand.

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has made it clear that human beings have been created with the best of destiny. They have been made the superior-most among the created and the universe has been placed at their service. These are great blessings which lie embedded in and dependent on listening to truth and obeying it. Once human beings turn their backs on listening to the truth, understanding and accepting it, all these blessings are sucked away from them and they are relegated to some species worse than animals.

It appears in Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān that human beings are, in terms of their original creation, superior to all animals, but are lower in rank as compared to angels. But, when human beings strive on the pathway of obedience to Allah, their creator, they rise higher in status than angels too. However, should they turn away from the pathway of obedience to Allah, they are condemned to become the lowest of the low, far too worse than animals.

In the fourth verse (23), it was said: وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ (And had Allah seen in them some good, He would have made them listen. And had He made them listen, they would have turned away paying no heed). In other words, the sense of the verse is: Had Allah seen in them some pliability towards receiving good counsel, He would have blessed them with the ability to listen with faith - and if, in their present state of being with no desire to receive truth, He were to make them listen to what is true, they would have certainly turned away from it paying no heed.

The word: خَيْر (khayr: good) at this place means the desire to find out the truth, for it is the quest for truth which opens the doors of deliberation and understanding and it is this very quest which enables one to believe and act. Thus, whoever has no quest for truth is as if he has no good in him. If such people did have some good in them, it is obvious that it would have been within the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā. Now, when they have no good in them as borne by the knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, it tells us that they stand deprived of every possible good in the real sense. Therefore, if they were to be invited to ponder, deliberate and believe in the truth within this state of deprivation, they would have never accepted it - rather, they would have turned away from it and run. This aversion, that is, would not be because of any flaw in the

religion they may have noticed which made them reject it. In fact, they just did not pay heed to what was the truth.

Incidentally, the stipulation made above also helps remove the nagging logical doubt which bothers many a learned people. They surmise that this is the first form of analogical deduction where the surrender of the middle premise seems to be yielding the wrong outcome. The answer is that the middle premise has not been repeated here because the sense of the first word: *لَاسْمَعُهُمْ* (*la asma'ahum*: He would have made them listen) is separate from the second: *وَلَوْ اَسْمَعُهُمْ* (*wa lau asma'ahum*: and had He made them listen) which carries its own sense apart from the first. Meant in the first is listening to accept and listening to benefit from, while the sense of the second is bland listening with nothing to it.

In the fifth verse (24), believers have been addressed once again. Commanded to obey Allah and His Messenger in a particular manner, they have been told that the thing to which Allah and His Messenger invite you is something which brings no benefit to Allah and His Messenger *per se*. Instead of that, all Divine injunctions have been prescribed for nothing but their own benefit. So, said in the manner pointed to above, was: *اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلّٰهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ* (respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to what gives you life).

What is the 'life' mentioned in this verse? Since several probabilities exist in its interpretation, learned commentators have taken different interpretive positions. According to Suddiyy, that life-giving thing is 'Imān (faith) because the disbeliever is dead. Qatādah said: That is Qur'an in which lies all life and success of both the worlds, Dunyā and 'Ākhirah. Mujāhid said: That is truth. Ibn Ishāq said: It means Jihād through which Allah Ta'ālā conferred honour on Muslims. All these probabilities mentioned here are sound as they are. There is no contradiction in them. The larger sense is that 'Imān, Qur'an or the following of truth are things which put life into the heart and the life of the heart is nothing but that everything which becomes a barrier between the Creator and the created, barriers like inertia and desire, should be removed from the way of truth leaving it free from whatever obstructions there are in order that the heart is filled with the light of insight into the Creator.

Based on a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه, Tirmidhī and Al-Nasā'ī have reported that on a certain day, the Holy Prophet ﷺ sent for Sayyidnā Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه who was busy with his Ṣalāh at that time. However, he completed his Ṣalāh sooner than he would have normally done and presented himself before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He asked: 'Why did you come so late despite that I called you?' Sayyidnā Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه submitted his excuse: 'I was in the state of Ṣalāh.' He said: 'Did you not hear what Allah Ta'ālā has said in: *اَسْتَجِبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ* (Respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you)?' Sayyidnā Ubayy ibn Ka'b رضى الله عنه said: 'I shall obey it from now on. If you call me, even when I am making my Ṣalāh, I shall present myself before you immediately.'

It is on the basis of this Ḥadīth that some Muslim jurists have said that anything done during Ṣalāh in obedience to the command of the Messenger of Allah would not be taken as interference in Ṣalāh. However, there are other jurists who say that Ṣalāh would though be terminated due to doings contrary to the standard rules governing Ṣalāh and it would have to be offered later as *qaḍā'* (replaced for the missed or terminated Ṣalāh). But, the proper thing to do is that should the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم call someone, even if he is in the state of Ṣalāh, then, he should terminate his Ṣalāh and obey the call.

As for this form of obedience, it is exclusive to the *Rasūl* of Allah ﷺ. But, there are other occasions when one may apprehend the danger of serious loss coming to someone, then, at that time too, Ṣalāh should be terminated and amends be made later by offering *qaḍā'*. For example, if a person in the state of Ṣalāh sees that a blind man is about to reach and fall in a well or ditch, then, he should immediately terminate his Ṣalāh and go to save the handicapped man.

At the end of the verse, it was said: *وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَاءِ وَقَلْبِهِ* (and be sure that Allah intervenes between man and his heart). This sentence can have two meanings, and both vibrate with great wisdom and good counsel, something one should always remember and live by.

One possible sense of the sentence is: When you are blessed with

the opportunity of doing something good, or staying safe from sin, then, go ahead and do it immediately - make no delay and take the lease of time so granted to be a blessing, because there are occasions when Divine decree becomes an intervening factor between man and his intention and he cannot succeed in doing what he intends to do. May be, a sickness overtakes, or death itself does, or some pre-occupation emerges out of nowhere and one just does not get the time to do that good or avoid that sin. Therefore, human beings should welcome the leave granted in terms of the years of life and access to time and refuse to put off until tomorrow what must be done today - for, who knows what is going to happen tomorrow?

من نمی گویم زیان کن یا بفکر سود باش ای ز فرصت بے خبر در هرچه باشی زود باش

I do not say that you run into some loss or go for your gain
Whatever be your option, O man unaware of time, be quick!

The second possible meaning emerges from the indication given by the sentence that Allah Ta'ālā is very near to His servant. In fact, in another verse of the Qur'an (Qāf, 50:16): نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ, Allah Ta'ālā says that He is close to man, much closer than his jugular vein.

Thus, the sense is that the heart of man is, in a special way, at the discretionary disposal of Allah Ta'ālā all the time. When He wills to keep a servant of His protected from evils, He puts a barrier between his heart and sins, and when misfortune is fated for someone, the barrier is placed between his heart and any possible good deeds by him. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم used to include the following prayer frequently when he prayed:

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

O reverser of hearts! Keep my heart firm on the Faith chosen by You.

The ultimate outcome of this too is no other but that one should not delay doing what must be done in obedience to the injunctions of Allah and His Rasūl, rather, one should take the lease of time given to him as a God-given opportunity and just go ahead and do it, for no one knows whether or not the surge and urge of this good deed remains active later on.

Verses 25 - 28

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً ۖ وَاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ
 مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ
 فَآوَاكُمْ وَأَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ ۖ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
 ﴿٢٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا
 أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ
 فِتْنَةٌ ۖ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

And beware of a punishment which shall not fall on the wrongdoers only, and be sure that Allah is severe at punishment. [25]

And remember when you were few in number, oppressed on the earth, fearing that the people would snatch you away. Then, He gave you shelter and fortified you with His support and provided you with good things, so that you may be grateful. [26]

O those who believe, do not betray the trust of Allah and the Messenger and do not betray your mutual trusts, while you know. [27]

And be aware that your wealth and your children are but a trial and that with Allah there is a great reward. [28]

Commentary

After having described some details of the battle of Badr and Divine blessings conferred on Muslims therein, the Holy Qur'an has offered words of good counsel to Muslims as based on the outcome of the Battle. This presentation begins from: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ (O those who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger - 8:24). The verses cited immediately above appear in continuation to the same.

Out of these, the first verse (25) carries an instruction to stay safe from a sin particularly, a sin the severe punishment of which does not remain restricted to only those who commit sins in a society. In fact, people who have committed no sin also get afflicted by it.

Which sin is that? The answers given by commentators vary. Some say: This sin is the forsaking of the struggle to Bid the Fair and Forbid the Unfair (*amr bi 'l-ma'rūf* and *nahy 'ani 'l-munkar*). Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said: Allah Ta'ālā has commanded Muslims that they should not allow any crime or sin to take roots in their social environment because, if they failed to do so, that is, did not forbid it despite seeing such crimes and sins and despite having the ability or capacity to stop it or to forbid it, then, Allah Ta'ālā will universalize His punishment for all of them which will spare neither the sinners nor the sinless.

The sinless mentioned here are people who are no accomplices of sinners in their initial sin, but they have certainly committed the sin of avoiding or abandoning the Divinely ordained duty of Bidding the Fair. Therefore, let there be no doubt here about the statement made. For example, here it is not valid to say that the passing on of the punishment of a sin committed by someone else to another person is injustice and that it is contrary to the Qur'anic injunction: لَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another person - 35:18) - because, here the sinners have been seized for the initial sin they themselves had committed while the sinless were seized for the sin of having abandoned the obligation of Bidding the Fair. Thus, no one's sin was placed on the shoulders of someone else.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه and Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in Sharḥ al-Sunnah and Ma'alim of Imām al-Baghawī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been reported to have said : Allah Ta'ālā does not subject common people with the punishment of some sin committed by a particular group among them - unless, there emerges a situation in which they see sin being committed around them and have the ability to stop it as well, yet, if they did not stop it, then, at that time, the punishment from Allah surrounds all of them.

Also reported authentically in Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and elsewhere is that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه said in one of his sermons: I have heard the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم say: When people see an oppressor and do not step forward and hold his hand from inflicting injustice, then, the time is near that Allah Ta'ālā makes His punishment fall on all of them alike.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā Nu'mān ibn Bashīr reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Those who commit the sin of transgressing the limits set by Allah and those who ignore them knowingly or accomodate them psychophantly, that is, they do not try to stop them from that sin, are like passengers on two decks of a ship, the upper and the lower. People on the lower deck come up to procure water from the upper deck which causes discomfort for people there. Keeping this in view, the people of the lower deck opt for making a hole in the bottom of the boat and get their supply of water from there. Now, if the people of the upper deck see this misconduct and elect not to check and stop them from doing something like that, then, it is obvious, the water will fill into the whole boat and when the people of the lower deck will drown in it, those on the upper deck will not remain safe either, for they too will drown with the others.

It is on the basis of these narrations that many commentators have declared that the word: *فِتْنَةً* (*fitnah*) in this verse refers to this very sin, that is, the forsaking of the obligation of Bidding the Fair and Forbidding the Unfair.

It appears in Tafsīr Mazḥarī that this sin means the sin of the abandonment of Jihād specially at a time when a general call for Jihād is given to common Muslims from their Amīr, a call on which depends the security and defence of Islamic hallmarks. The reason is that this is a time when the curse of forsaking Jihād does not fall only on those who forsake Jihād but it also falls on the whole body of Muslims. Because Kuffār run over Muslim areas, women and children and old people and many innocent Muslims become victims of their killing and plunder. Their lives and properties are endangered. If that be the situation, 'punishment' would mean worldly distress and hardships.

The factual evidence of this explanation is that those who forsake Jihād have been condemned in the previous verses as well. Previous verses, such as: *وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكُفْرَهُونَ* (while a group from the believers were averse to it - 8:5) and: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا زَحَفًا فَلَا تَوَلَّوْهُمْ الْأَذْبَارَ* (O those who believe, when you face the disbelievers marching to battle, then do not turn your backs on them - 8:15) have appeared in support of this approach to the problem.

The same thing happened at the battle of Badr when some Mus-

lims wavered with their choice of suitable conduct. They left their security post on the hills and came down. When this happened, the ill effects of their action did not remain restricted to those who had made the error, in fact, they hit the entire Muslim army, so much so that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was himself injured in this battle.

The second verse (26) also mentions several things which could make Divine injunctions easy on them. To persuade them towards the option of obedience to Allah, Muslims have been reminded of their past weakness and of how Allah has blessed them with power and confidence by changing surrounding conditions through His grace and mercy. The text says:

وَاذْكُرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَتَخَطَّفَكُمُ النَّاسُ
فَأَوَّكَكُمْ وَأَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ .

And remember when you were few in number, oppressed on the earth, fearing that the people would snatch you away. Then, He gave you shelter and fortified you with His support and provided you with good things, so that you may be grateful - 26.

In this verse, Muslims are being asked to remember the conditions they were facing in Makkah during the pre-Hijrah period following which they were given the finest sanctuary at Madīnah. Not only that, they were also blessed with Divine support, power and victory over adversaries, as well as assets of great value. Then, towards the end of the verse, it was said: لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (so that you may be grateful). It means that the purpose behind this great transformation of conditions around them supported by the flow of Divine blessings was to give them an opportunity to show their gratefulness as obedient servants of Allah, for the finest demonstration of gratefulness, in the real sense, comes through nothing but obedience to what Allah commands them to do.

In the third verse (27), Muslims have been instructed not to commit any breach of trust (*khiyānah*) in the dual rights due against them, that is, in the rights of Allah (*Huqūqullāh*) or in the mutual rights of the servants of Allah as enjoined on each other (*Huqūqul-'Ibād*) - either by failing to fulfill them totally, or by fulfilling them in a defective manner leaving one or the other shortcoming behind. Then, by saying:

وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (while you know) at the end of the verse, it was stressed that they already knew that breach of trust was an evil conduct lined with many a curse, therefore, going ahead to do something like that was not what an intelligent person would choose to do - and, since the cause of negligence or shortcoming in fulfilling the rights of the servants of Allah is usually one's attachment to property and children, a warning was given in verse 28 by saying: **وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ** (And be aware that your wealth and your children are but a trial and that with Allah there is a great reward).

The word: **فِتْنَةٌ** (*fitnah*) used here carries the sense of 'trial' as well as that of 'punishment.' Then, such things as become the cause of punishment are also referred to as '*fitnah*.' In different verses of the Qur'an, '*fitnah*' has been used to carry these three meanings. At this place, there is room for all three. There are occasions when one's own property and children become a can of troubles for him and that they would push him into negligence and disobedience and become the very cause of punishment right here in this world is all too obvious. Firstly, the sense could be that Allah aims to put you to test through your property and children for these are His blessings. Now, you prove whether you become grateful and obedient after having received these, or that you choose to be ungrateful and disobedient. Also possible is the second, even the third meaning, that is, should you become all engrossed in your love for your property and children and bring upon yourself the displeasure of Allah, then, these very children and property will become your punishment. There are occasions within this mortal world when one is engulfed into all sorts of hardships because of property and children and he starts experiencing the heat of punishment right here. Even if the case be otherwise, it stands settled that the property which was acquired or spent by ways counter to the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā will itself become, in the Hereafter, the active agent of punishment through snakes, scorpions and brandings by fire - as stated clearly in several verses of the Qur'an and numerous narrations of the Ḥadīth. Finally, the third meaning is that these things become the cause of punishment. As pointed out a little earlier, it is quite evident that once these things become the cause of heedlessness towards and disobedience to Allah Ta'ālā and His injunctions, they automatically become the cause of punishment. At the end of the verse (28), it was said: **وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ** (and that with Allah there is a great reward). In

other words, one should understand clearly that for a person who is not all-subdued by his love for property and children while doing his duty of being obedient to the commands of Allah and His *Rasūl*, there is a great reward for him with Allah.

As for the thematic content of this verse, it applies to all Muslims, but the cause of its revelation, according to the majority of commentators, is the event relating to Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه as it came to pass during the battle of Banū Qurayzah. As reported, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and the noble Companions kept the fort of Banū Qurayzah under siege for twenty one days which compelled them to make the request that they be allowed to leave their homeland and go to Syria. In view of their wickedness, he did not accede to their request. Instead, he said that the only option of peace open to them was that they should now agree to whatever decision Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه gave in their case. Thereupon, they requested that Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه be entrusted with this duty in place of Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنه. The reason was that the family and property of Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه were located in the Banū Qurayzah area. He, they thought, would take a lenient attitude in their case. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه as they requested. When he reached there, men and women from Banū Qurayzah assembled around him and started crying. They asked: If we were to surrender at the command of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and come out of the fort, would he be lenient to us? Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه knew that leniency was not the settled policy in this matter. However, it was partly because of their wailing and plaint and partly because of his own love and concern for his family and children that he passed his hand sword-like over his neck giving the signal that they shall be slaughtered. Thus, as one would say, he disclosed the secret of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The consideration of property and the love of children and family made him do what he did. But, he was immediately alerted to what had happened. He realized that he had committed a breach of trust reposed in him by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he returned from there, he was so overwhelmed by his sense of shame that he, rather than return to his master, went straight to his Masjid and it was a pillar of the Masjid that he tied himself to swearing that he will stay tied

like that until his *taubah* (repentance) was accepted, even if he were to die in that condition. So, for seven full days he stood there tied like that. His wife and daughter used to attend to him. They would untie him so that he could take care of his human compulsions and make his Ṣalāh. When he had done that, they would tie him again. He would usually avoid eating and drinking, so much so that he would faint out of weakness.

When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم got this news initially, he said: If he had come to me first, I would have sought forgiveness for him and his *taubah* would have been accepted. Now that he has gone through this act of his, there is nothing left but to wait for the revelation of the Divine acceptance of his *taubah*. So, it was after seven days when, late at night, these verses relating to the acceptance of his *taubah* were revealed. Some Ṣaḥābah gave him the good news and reached out to untie him from the pillar. But, he said: Until such time that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would not decide to untie me, I would not prefer to be untied. Thus, when he came into the Masjid at the time of the Fajr Ṣalāh, he untied him with his own blessed hands. The real cause of the revelation of the cited verse which contains the prohibition of becoming overwhelmed by the concern and love for property and children and not fulfilling the trust of Allah is as stated above. Allah knows best.

Verses 29 - 33

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ
عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾
وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ
وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَى
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا ۖ إِنْ
هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا
هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ۖ أَوِائِتِنَا
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا

كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

O those who believe, if you fear Allah, He will provide you with a criterion (to distinguish between right and wrong) and will write off your evil deeds and will forgive you. And Allah is the Lord of great bounty. [29]

And (remember) when the disbelievers were plotting against you to hold you (in detention) or to kill you or to expel you. And they were plotting and Allah was plotting, and Allah is the best of those who plot. [30]

And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, "We have heard, if we wish, we can say something like this. It is nothing but the tales of the ancient." [31]

And (remember) when they said, "O Allah, if this be indeed the truth (revealed) from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment." [32]

And Allah is not to send punishment upon them while you are in their midst, nor would Allah send punishment upon them while they are seeking forgiveness. [33]

Commentary

The previous verse mentioned property and children as being a trial for mortal man because these are things the concern and love for which make one so overtaken that one would usually turn heedless towards Allah, the Creator and 'Ākhirah, the life-to-come - though, the rational demand of this great blessing was that one should have shown a far pronounced tilt towards Him because of this favour.

The first verse out of those quoted above completes this very subject. Here, it is said that the person who keeps his emotion subservient to his reason, remains steadfast in this trial and sees to it that the obedience to Allah Ta'ālā and love for Him stay ahead of everything - which is called Taqwā in the terminology of Qur'ān and Sharī'ah - then, he is blessed with three things in return. These are: (1) *Furqān* (the criterion of distinguishing between right and wrong), (2) *Kaffārah* of *Sayyi'āt* (the expiation of evils done) and (3) *Maghfirah* (forgiveness from Allah).

Furqān and *Farq* are both verbal nouns having the same meaning.

In usage, Furqān is the name of the thing which separates and makes two things clearly distinct. Therefore, a decision is called Furqān because it makes the difference between true and false very distinct. The help and support from Allah is also called Furqān because, through it, the protagonists of truth are made to win and their antagonists are made to taste defeat which makes the difference between right and wrong and true and false loud and clear. In the Holy Qur'ān, it is in this sense that the battle of Badr has been called the Yowm al-Furqān, the Day of Distinction (between right and wrong).

According to the majority of commentators, the sense of providing Furqān to those who fear Allah is that the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā is with them. No enemy can hurt them and success goes with them in all objectives they undertake:

هرکه ترسید از حق و تقوی گزید ترسد ازوے جن وانس وهرکه دید

Whoever fears Allah and takes to piety (Taqwā)
Is feared at sight by Jinns and Humans of the world.

It appears in Tafsīr Mahā'imī that an indication has been given here towards the slip made by Sayyidnā Abū Lubābah رضى الله عنه because of his desire to provide protection for his family and children as mentioned a little earlier in the event relating to him. He was in the error particularly for the reason that the correct and the only method of keeping his family and children protected was no other but that total obedience to Allah Ta'ālā and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم should have been made his personal benchmark as a result of which whatever belonged to him including his family and children would have come under the security umbrella of Allah Ta'ālā. Other than this, there are other commentators who say that Furqān in this verse means the wisdom and insight through which it becomes easy to distinguish between true and false, the genuine and the fake. Thus, the core meaning of the statement would be that Allah Ta'ālā arms those who observe Taqwā with such insight and intelligence that it becomes easy for them to go ahead and decide between the good and the evil.

The second blessing received in return for practising Taqwā is the *Kaffārah* of *Saiyyi'āt* which means that the errors and slips which get to be committed by the practitioner of Taqwā are expiated and replaced right here in this mortal world, that is, he is blessed with the

ability or *Taufīq* of doing such good deeds as pale out all his slips of conduct. Finally, the third thing one is fortunate to receive in return for Taqwā is forgiveness in the Hereafter and the ultimate pardon of all shortcomings and sins.

At the end of the verse (29), it was said: **وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ** (And Allah is the Lord of great bounty). By saying that Allah is limitless in His grace and favour, the hint given is that the return of a deed follows the measure of that deed. Here too, the good return mentioned as being the reward of Taqwā in three things comes as recompense or return but, Allah Ta'ālā is the master-dispenser of great grace and favour. When He gives, He is not bound by any measure, nor can anyone estimate or guess His favour and reward. Therefore, for those who take to Taqwā as their style of life, much greater hopes should be entertained from the grace and reward of Allah Ta'ala in things other than the three mentioned earlier.

The second verse (30) points out to a particular reward and favour of Allah Ta'ālā which has been conferred on the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, the noble Companions and, in fact, on the whole world. This came to be before the Hijrah when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was encircled by the disbelievers and they were planning to detain or kill him. Then, Allah Ta'ālā made their unholy intentions lick dust and made it possible for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to reach the city of Madīnah in perfect safety.

The related incident has been reported in Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr and Tafsīr Maḥzarī on the authority of narrations from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and others. According to details of this incident, when the news about visiting residents of Madīnah embracing Islām became known in Makkah, the Quraysh of Makkah started worrying about it. They thought that the matter of people becoming Muslims was something restricted to Makkah upto that point of time, an area where they held all power in their hands. But, as Islām had started spreading in Madīnah, many Companions of the Prophet had migrated to that city, it went to prove that Muslims had another center in Madīnah where they could assemble a fighting force against them and possibly decide to attack. Alongwith this, they also realized that this was just the beginning when only some Companions have migrated to Madīnah. There was strong likelihood that

Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم may also go and join them. Therefore, the notable chiefs of Makkah called a special meeting for mutual consultations at Dār al-Nadwah. This place called Dār al-Nadwah was the home of Quṣay ibn Kilāb and was located close to al-Masjid al-Ḥaram. These people used it as the place where they met to consult on national problems. During the Islamic period, it has been merged in al-Masjid al-Ḥaram. It is said that the present Bāb al-Ziyadāt was the place known as Dār al-Nadwah.

As customary, the Quraysh chiefs met at Dār al-Nadwah for this significant consultation. All known leaders from the Quraysh such as Abū Jahl, Nadhr ibn Ḥārith, 'Utbah, Shaybah, Umaiyyah ibn Khalaf, Abū Sufyān and others participated. The agenda considered was how to confront and block the rising power of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Islām.

Before this consultative meeting could be called to order, there appeared Iblīs, the accursed, in the guise of an aged 'Arab Shaykh. People on the door of Dār al-Nadwah asked: Who are you and why have you come here? The answer given was: I am a resident of Najd. I have been told that you have assembled here to discuss an important national issue. So, as a well-wisher of our people, I am here in the hope that I too may be able to tender some useful advice on the matter under consideration.

His plea was heard. He was called in. Then, began the process of suggestions on the subject. According to a narration reported by Suhailī, it was suggested by Abū al-Bakhtārī ibn Hishām that 'he' (meaning the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) should be chained and detained in a house. The door should be locked and he should be left there until he dies, God forbid, his own death. Hearing this, the Shaykh of Najd - Iblīs, the accursed - said: This proposal is not sound for if you did that, this action is not going to remain hidden. In fact, it will be publicized far too widely. Then, you already know how good his Companions are in staking their lives for his sake. It is quite possible that these people may get together, attack you and rescue their prisoner from your detention. This caused voices to rise from all sides which supported the view of the Shaykh of Najd as sound. After that, Abū al-Aswad proposed that 'he' should be expelled out from Makkah. Let him go out of here and do whatever he wishes to do. This will make

our city safe from the disorder generated by him and, when we do so, we shall be doing no fighting and killing.

Hearing this, the Shaykh of Najd once again said: This proposal too is not sound. Do you not realize how soft-spoken a person he is? When people hear him talk, they are totally charmed by him. If he was left free like that, he would soon assemble a powerful group around him and attack you and defeat you. Now, it was Abū Jahl's turn to speak. He said: None of you seems to have understood what must be really done. Here is my plan of action. I propose that we pick out one youngman from each tribe out of all tribes of Arabia and arm each one of them with a lethal sword. Then, all of them, moving jointly and suddenly, attack and kill him. This action will at least deliver us from the problems engineered by him. Now, remains the aftermath of this killing. His tribe, Banū 'Abd Munāf, may rise with their claim of retaliation against the killing, something we are legally bound to face. So, in such a situation, when the actual killing was done, not by one single person, instead, by one person from each tribe, then, the claim of Qīṣāṣ, that is, taking life for life, cannot hold good after all. What would remain valid will be only the claim for blood money or property against *diyyah*. That we shall collect from all tribes, give it to them and be done with it.

When the Shaykh of Najd, Iblīs, the accursed in disguise, heard this, he said: This is it. Nothing else is going to work. The whole assembly voted in his favour and it was resolved that this sinister plan would be put into action exactly the same night.

What these ignorant people could not understand was the unseen power of the prophets, may they all be blessed. As a consequence, two things happened. On the one hand, Archangel Jibra'īl informed the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about everything that had transpired at their meeting at Dār al-Nadwah giving him a counter-plan whereby he would not sleep in his bed that night and telling him that Allah Ta'ālā has allowed him to migrate from Makkah.

On the other hand, by the fall of the evening, the Quraysh youngmen put a cordon round the house of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. When he saw this, he ordered Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضى الله عنه that he should sleep in the Prophet's bed that night giving him the good news that the plan was though full of a danger to his life obviously, yet

the enemies would not be able to harm him in any way.

Happy to be at his service, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه went into his bed. But, the problem was as to how the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was to get out of this siege. This difficulty was resolved by Allah Ta'ālā through a miracle when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, acting under the command of Allah Ta'ālā, came out with a handful of dust in one of his hands, responded to what his besiegers were saying about him, but it so happened that Allah Ta'ālā turned their sights and minds away from him in a way that none of them saw him even though he passed by them throwing dust on their heads. When he was gone, some visitor asked them as to why were they standing there. They said that they were waiting for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Thereupon, the visitor told them: You must be dreaming. He has already gone from here and while going he had been throwing dust on the heads of everyone among you. They all felt their heads with their hands which confirmed the fact that everyone's head had a deposit of dust on it.

When they went into the house, Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه was lying in the bed of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, but the way he was tossing and turning in the bed made it possible for the besiegers to realize that he was not Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, therefore, they did not venture to kill him. After carrying out their operation of siege right through the morning, these people went back disappointed and disgraced. This night and the event of Sayyidnā 'Alī staking his life for the sake of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم therein is rated to be among special merits credited to Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضي الله عنه.

The three suggestions made to deal with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during the consultative meeting of Quraysh chiefs have been mentioned by the Holy Qur'an in the verse: *وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ* (And [remember] when the disbelievers were plotting against you to hold you [in detention] or to kill you or to expel you - 30).

But, Allah Ta'ālā made all their plans and projections go to dust. That is why it was said towards the end: *وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمُنْكِرِينَ* (and Allah is the best of those who plot - 30). It means that Allah is the best of planners. His plan pales out all plans - as demonstrated in this case.

Lexically, the Arabic word: *مكر* (*makr*: translated as 'plot') means restricting one's adversary from carrying out his intention through some

stragem or plan. Then, if this action is taken for a good purpose, this type of '*makr*' is commendable and good - and should it be done for some evil purpose, it is blameworthy and bad. Therefore, this word can be used for man, and for Allah Ta'ālā as well. But, it is used for Allah only in an environment where the context and contrast of speech does not lend to any doubt of *makr* which is blameworthy (Maẓharī) as it is here.

At this place, it is also noteworthy that the words used at the end of the verse are in the indefinite tense which denotes present and future. It was said: وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ (And they were plotting and Allah was plotting - 30), that is, they will keep plotting to hurt believers while Allah Ta'ālā will keep plotting to thwart and frustrate their plots. The hint given therein is that this will continue to remain a lasting mark of disbelievers that they go about engineering designs to hurt Muslims - while, in the same way, the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā shall also keep repulsing their evil designs against true believers.

Mentioned in verses 31 and 32 is the absurd remark made by Naḍr ibn Ḥārith, a participant of the same meeting at Dār al-Nadwah, with its reply appearing in verse 33. Naḍr ibn Ḥārith was a businessman who used to travel to different countries where he had repeated opportunities of seeing religious books of the Jews and Christians as well as witnessing their modes of worship. When he heard about the accounts of past communities appearing in the Holy Qur'ān, he said: قَدْ سَمِعْنَا لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَقُلْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ (we have heard, if we wish, we can say something like this. It is nothing but the tales of the ancient - 31). Thereupon, some of the Companions challenged him: If you can say something like this, why would you not say it? The Qur'ān had already spoken on the subject and made it the very criterion of the true and the false. The challenge of the Qur'ān was beamed at the whole world. If its opponents were true, let them come up with the like of even a very small Sūrah. In contrast, those who claimed to stake their lives and sacrifice their wealth and children for the sake of upholding their counter-assertion could not even join up their abilities together and come out even with a small Sūrah which could stand on its own against the Qur'ān. Now, after all this, to stand up and say that we too can say something like this, if we so wished, is something no self-respecting person would venture to say. Thus, when the Companions told him

that the Qur'an was nothing but the Divine word, he tried to counter the assertion by showing his own firm adherence to his incorrect faith by saying:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ كَانَ هٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَاَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ اَوْ
اِثْنًا بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ

O Allah, if this be indeed the truth [revealed] from You, then, rain down upon us stones from the heavens, or bring upon us a painful punishment - 32.

The answer to this was given by the Qur'an itself. First, it was said: وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَاَنْتَ فِيْهِمْ (And Allah is not to send punishment upon them while you are in their midst [in Makkah] - 33). The reason is that it is the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā with all blessed prophets that He would not send His punishment over a habitation where they are present until He takes out his prophets from there. This is as it happened in the case of Sayyidnā Hūd, Sayyidnā Ṣāliḥ and Sayyidnā Lūṭ, may peace be upon them all. Punishment did not come as long as they remained in their towns. Punishment came when they were taken out from there. As for the Prophet of Islām ﷺ, he was sent to this world as universal mercy. That Divine punishment would come on him while he was present in a town was an eventuality counter to his station.

In a nutshell, the answer is: Because of your hostility towards Qur'an and Islām, you very much deserve to have stones rain at you but the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Makkah prohibits it. According to Imām Ibn Jarīr, this part of the verse was revealed at a time when he was present in Makkah. Then, came Hijrah to Madīnah where the second part was revealed as follows: وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ (nor would Allah send punishment on them while they are seeking forgiveness - 33). It means that following his migration to Madīnah, though the preventive factor of a mass punishment stood removed as he was not present there in Makkah, yet there did remain another factor preventing the coming of mass punishment even at that time since many weaker ones among Muslims who were unable to migrate had remained behind in Makkah and they were the ones who kept praying to Allah Ta'ālā for their forgiveness. It was for their sake that punishment was not sent upon the people of Makkah.

When, even these blessed souls migrated to Madīnah, the sentence appearing in the next verse (34): (وَمَا لَهُمْ آلَا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ) (And what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-harām*) was revealed.

The sense is that there were two hinderances to the coming of punishment. They both have been removed. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was no more there in Makkah, nor there remained those forgiveness-seeking Muslims in that city. Thus, there appeared to be no hinderance to the coming of punishment. Particularly so, because the people of Makkah were already deserving of punishment for their hostility to Islām while on top of which - despite being themselves incapable of any act of worship worth the name - they had started preventing people who wished to go into *al-masjid al-harām* for 'Ibādah, 'Umrah and Ṭawāf. So, at that stage, their entitlement to punishment had become mature and complete. Consequently, it was through the Conquest of Makkah that punishment was sent upon them.

The event relating to the preventing of people from entering *al-masjid al-harām* took place at the expedition of Ḥudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had gone there with the intention of making 'Umrah with his Companions. The disbelievers of Makkah stopped him from entering the city and compelled him and all his Companions to undo their Ihṛām and return back. This happened in the Hijrah year 6. Two years later, in Hijrah 8, Makkah was conquered. Thus, it was at the hands of Muslims that punishment was sent upon them.

This explanation given by Ibn Jarīr rests on the assumption that the factor of the Holy Prophet's presence in Makkah should be considered as the hinderance to punishment while others have maintained that the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the world is itself the prohibitive factor against any mass punishment. As long as he graces the world with his presence, no punishment can come over his people. The reason for this is obvious. The state of his call to prophethood is different. It is not similar to that of other blessed prophets as they were sent to particular areas or tribes. When they left these and arrived at some new place, punishment would overtake the people they left behind. This is contrary to the case of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم whose prophethood and messengership is universal until the Last Day of this mortal life. So, the place of his blessed arrival and the

scope of his mission as a Messenger of Allah extends to the whole world. Therefore, as long as he is present in any part of the world, no punishment can visit his people.

Based on this Tafsīr, it would mean that the doings of the people of Makkah demanded nothing less than that they be struck with a rain of stones. But, two things became a hinderance to this punishment: (1) The presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the world and (2) the seeking of forgiveness by the people of Makkah because they, despite being polytheists and disbelievers, used to say: غفرانك غفرانك (we seek Your forgiveness, we seek Your forgiveness) in their Ṭawāf. Though, this seeking of forgiveness by them coupled with disbelief (*shirk*) may not be beneficial in the Hereafter, but the benefit of doing that too in this world which accrued to them was that they escaped punishment in the mortal world. The standing truth is that Allah Ta'ālā does not let anyone's deed go to waste. If disbelievers and polytheists do something good, its return is given to them right here in this world. As for what is said after that - 'and what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-ḥaram* - it would then mean that the absence of punishment in the world should not embolden these people to become arrogant and complacent thinking that they were no sinners or that punishment would not come upon them at all. May be, not in the mortal world, but there is just no escape or deliverance from the punishment of the Hereafter. Given this Tafsīr, the punishment mentioned in: مَا لَهُمْ إِلَّا يَعِزُّهُمْ (and what is with them that Allah should not punish them - 34) would be referring to the punishment of the Hereafter.

To sum up, it can be said that the verses cited here leave beneficial information for us: (1) That Allah Ta'ālā does not send punishment upon a locality in which people seek His forgiveness. This is His customary practice. (2) That no punishment would come upon the community of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, believing or disbelieving, while he is present among them. This is as it came to pass in the case of the people of Sayyidnā Nūḥ, Lūṭ and Shu'ayb عليهم السلام. Their people were destroyed to the last person. Should some punishment visit individuals or a limited number of them, that would not be considered contrary to it - as was said by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the punishment of *khasf*: خسف and *maskh*: مسح will visit his Ummah. *Khasf* means to sink into the ground or be swallowed by it while *Maskh* means dis-

figuration and transformation into an animal such as monkey or swine. The intimation intended is that there will be those limited few individuals of the community who would be visited by such punishments as well.

As for the phenomenon of the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in this world, it will remain operative right through the Last Day of Qiyāmah because his mission of prophethood is operative till then. In addition to that, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is alive even at this time, though the nature and form of this life is different from his previous life. Now, any effort at this stage to engage in the debate as to what is the difference between these two lives will be ineffectual and futile - because, nothing that this community of Muslims has to do in terms of its religious or worldly duties depends on it. Neither has the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself, nor his noble Ṣaḥābah have liked such wasteful and unnecessary debates. In fact, they have prohibited it.

The essence of the submission is that the marvel of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم being alive in his resting place and the unbroken continuity of his prophethood right through the Last Day of Qiyāmah prove that he is in this world right through Qiyāmah, therefore, this community of his shall remain safe against any mass punishment until that fateful Day.

Verses 34 - 38

وَمَا لَهُمْ آلَا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ^ط إِنْ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقُونَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً^ط فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ^ط فَسَيُنفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ^ط وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضَهُ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلَهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ^ط أُولَٰئِكَ

هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

And what is with them that Allah should not punish them while they prevent [people] from *al-masjid al-haram*, even though they are not its custodians. Its custodians are none but the God-fearing, but most of them do not know. [34] And their prayer near the House was not more than whistling and clapping. So, taste the punishment, because you used to disbelieve. [35]

Surely, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to prevent [people] from the way of Allah. So, they shall spend it, then it will become remorse for them, then they shall be overpowered. And those who disbelieve shall be gathered into Jahannam, [36] so that Allah separates the impure from the pure, and puts some of the impure on some others, and heaps them all together and puts them into Jahannam. Those are the losers. [37]

Say to those who disbelieve that if they stop, they shall be forgiven for what has passed (of their sins), and if they repeat, then, the precedent of the earlier people is already established. [38]

Commentary

It was said in previous verses that the disbelievers of Makkah were though deserving, because of their disbelief and denial, of heavenly punishment coming down upon them, but the presence of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in Makkah was a prohibitive factor against the coming of a mass punishment on them. Then, after his migration to Madīnah, such punishment would still not come upon them because of the weaker ones among Muslims who, while living in Makkah, kept seeking forgiveness from Allah.

In the verses quoted above, it has been stated that though their due punishment was advanced till later either for the sake of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم or in consideration of the weaker ones among Muslims, they should not make the mistake of thinking that they are no more deserving of punishment. The fact is that their being deserving of punishment is loud and clear. Then, other than their disbelief and denial, there are many more crimes committed by them because of which punishment should be visiting them positively. The first two

verses (34, 35) list three such crimes by them.

1. Firstly, these people are themselves just not worthy of going into the Sacred Mosque and devote to acts of worship there as due - and these very people prevent Muslims who wish to go there to devote themselves to acts of worship, Ṣalāh, Ṭawāf etc. Here, the reference is to the event at Ḥudaibiyah when, in the Hijrah year 6, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had reached there with his Ṣaḥābah in order to perform 'Umrah at Makkah - and the disbelievers of Makkah had prevented him from doing so and had compelled him to go back.

2. Secondly, for no sane reason, these people assume and claim that they were the custodians of the Sacred Mosque whereby they would let anyone they permit come in and not permit anyone they did not wish to come in.

This thinking of theirs was a combination of two misunderstandings. To begin with, they took themselves to be the custodians of the Sacred Mosque although no Kāfir can become the custodian of any mosque. Then, they thought that a custodian had the right to stop anyone he wished from entering into the mosque - while, a *masjid* or mosque is a House of God and no one has the right to stop anyone from coming in it. Of course, exempted are particular situations in which there be the apprehension of someone desecrating the mosque or causing pain to other makers of Ṣalāh there. For example, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Shield your *masājid* from small children, and insane individuals, and from mutual disputations. Small children mean children who have no sense of purity or impurity, therefore, the danger of the later is predominant. Then, the same danger of impurity as well as the danger of causing pain to those making Ṣalāh exists in the case of someone insane. As for mutual disputations, it amounts to desecration of the *masjid* and is also a source of causing pain to people making Ṣalāh there.

In the light of the Ḥadīth quoted above, the custodian (*mutawallī*) of the *masjid* does have the right not to allow such small children and insane individuals into the *masjid*, and see to it that no one indulges in mutual disputes in the *masjid* - but, in the absence of such situations, no custodian of a *masjid* has the right to stop a Muslim from coming into the *masjid*.

In the first verse cited above, it has been considered sufficient to state that there was no way these people could be taken as custodians of the Sacred Mosque when the rule was that only God-fearing Muslims could become its custodian. From here we learn that the custodian of a *masjid* should be a practicing-observing Muslim, in faith and conduct. And there are some commentators who take the pronoun in: ﴿أُولَٰئِكَ﴾ as reverting to Allah Ta'ālā which would mean: 'only the God-fearing can be the *Awliyā* of Allah.'

According to the Tafsīr mentioned immediately above, the outcome of the verse would be that those who, despite acting contrary to Shari'ah and Sunnah, claim to be a *Waliyy* of Allah are liars and those who take such people to be a *Waliyy* of Allah are down in deception.

3. The third crime of these people, other than the filth of Kufr and Shirk which was already their way of life, was the state of their doings which were low down, much lower than the ordinary human level. A sampling of this was pointed to when it was said that the act of prayer which these people called Ṣalāh was nothing but that they would whistle with their mouths and clap with their hands. It is obvious that no reasonable person would call these acts 'worship' and 'prayer,' in fact, not even a regular human act. Therefore, at the end of the verse (35), it was said: ﴿فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ﴾ (So, taste the punishment, because you used to disbelieve), that is, the denouement of their disbelief and crimes is that they must now taste the punishment of Allah. 'Punishment' referred to here may mean the punishment of the Hereafter, as well as the punishment in the present world which came upon them in the battle of Badr at the hands of Muslims.

After that, described in verse 36, there is another event relating to the disbelievers of Makkah when they collected a huge fund to raise a powerful striking force against Muslims and then spent it to wipe out the true faith and its upholders. But, what happened finally was that lost to them was not only the wealth they had pooled together but that they, rather than achieve their objective, were themselves subjected to utter disgrace.

The event as reported by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عليه وسلم is as follows. When the defeated, injured and surviving disbelievers of Makkah returned from the battle of Badr back to their city, the people whose fathers or sons were killed in

Jihād went to Abū Sufyān, the leader of the trade caravan. They told him: You know that this war was fought in defence of your trade caravan as a result of which we had to suffer from all this loss of lives and properties. Therefore, we wish that we be helped by this corporate trading venture so that we can take our revenge against Muslims in the future. The people of the trading company accepted their plea and gave them a huge amount which they spent on their bid for victory in the battle of 'Uḥud. In this bid too, which was to avenge their defeat in the battle of Badr, they met a sad end and were overpowered as before. With the shock of defeat, left for them was the added remorse for having lost all that wealth they had invested in the unsuccessful challenge.

In this verse, the Holy Qur'ān has foretold the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about this event much before it took place. It said there: "Surely, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to prevent (people) from the way of Allah. So, they shall spend it, then it will become remorse for them, then they shall be overpowered -36." Consequently, this is how it happened at the battle of 'Uḥud. They spent everything they had collected. Then, they were overpowered as a result of which, on top of the shock of defeat, they were smitten by the remorse for having lost the wealth they had invested in their venture.

Al-Baghawī and some other commentators have attributed the subject of this verse to the expenses incurred on the battle of Badr itself. According to them, the thousand strong army of disbelievers which had gone to confront Muslims in the battle of Badr was already paid for. All expenses of their maintenance were guaranteed by twelve chiefs of Makkah, included among them being Abū Jahl, 'Utbaḥ, Shaybah and others. It goes without saying that the cost of transporting and feeding one thousand men must have been enormous. This being the state of affairs, these people not only that they felt bad about their defeat, they were also extremely remorseful about having lost their wealth. (Mazharī)

At the end of the verse (36), given there is the evil end of these people in terms of the Hereafter: **وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ يُخْشَرُونَ** (And those who disbelieve shall be gathered into Jahannam).

In the verse under study, the mention of an evil end of spending wealth to stop people from following the true faith also includes the

disbelievers of today who spend enormous wealth in the name of hospitals, educational institutions and charities only to stop people from following Islām and to attract them to their call for the false. Similarly, also included here are all those who have gone astray, those who spend their wealth to invite people to listen to doubts and superstitions they have generated into the established collective beliefs of Islam. But, Allah Ta'ālā has His ways of keeping the faith revealed by Him protected. There are many occasions when it is openly noticed that such people fail to achieve their objective despite having spent huge amount of money and materials.

Verse 37 describes some consequences of the events mentioned earlier which, in a nutshell, are that the disbelievers used their wealth against Islām, then they were bitten by remorse and were utterly disgraced. This series of happenings had its own advantages which find mention in the opening sentence of this verse: لَيَمَيِّرُ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ (so that Allah separates the impure from the pure).

The two words, الخبيث (*al-khabīth* : impure) and الطيب (*aṭ-ṭaiyyib* : pure), stand in contrast to each other. The word, *al-khabīth*, is used to refer to that which is impure, filthy and forbidden while *aṭ-ṭaiyyib* set against it denotes what is pure, clean, nice and lawful. At this place, the use of these two words may be referring to the impure possessions of the disbelievers, and the pure possessions of Muslim as well. Given this projection, it would mean that the enormous wealth spent by the disbelievers was impure and filthy. The evil end it met was that they suffered the loss of wealth, and the loss of lives as well. As compared to them, Muslims spent very little of whatever they had in the name of wealth, but that wealth was pure and lawful. Those who spent it succeeded, not to mention the additional spoils of war that fell into their hand. After that, it was said:

وَيَجْعَلُ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ .

'and (Allah) puts some of the impure on some others, and heaps them all together and puts them into Jahannam. Those are the losers - 37'

The sense is that the way magnet pulls iron and amber pulls grass and in the light of new scientific discoveries, the system of the world is

held together by the constant of force fields pulling things together, the case in deeds and morals is also identical. They have a pull of their own. One bad deed draws in another bad deed and a good deed draws in another good deed. Impure wealth pulls in another body of impure wealth and then this heap of impure wealth generates vestiges which are equally impure. As a result of this, Allah Ta'ālā will heap all impure wealth into Jahannam and those to whom it belonged would find themselves in a terrible loss.

And there is a large number of commentators who take *al-khābīṭh* and *aṭ-ṭaiyyib* in the general sense at this place, that is, pure and impure. Thus, pure would signify true believers and impure would mean the disbelievers. Given this approach, the verse would mean that through conditions mentioned above, Allah Ta'ālā likes to make the pure distinct from the impure, that is, make a true believer distinct from a disbeliever and - as a consequence of which - true believers are gathered together in Jannah and the disbelievers, all of them at one place, into Jahannam.

Appearing once again in verse 38, there is a patronizing address to disbelievers - which carries the elements of persuasion and warning both. The part of persuasion is that should they repent from their shocking deeds even then, and come forward to believe, then, all their past sins shall be forgiven. If they failed to desist even then, the warning part tells them that they better understand that Allah Ta'ālā would not have to think about making some new law for them. The law is already there. It has been in force in the case of disbelievers of earlier times. The same law would come into force against them too - that they were destroyed in the present world and became deserving of the punishment of the Hereafter.

Verses 39 - 40

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ
انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوَلِّكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمُوَلَّى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٠﴾

And fight them until there is no Fitnah (disorder or disbelief) and total obedience becomes for Allah. So, if they desist, then, Allah is indeed watchful over what

they do. [39] And if they turn away, then, be sure that Allah is your protector. He is the excellent protector and excellent supporter. [40]

Commentary

We are now on verse 39 of Sūrah al-Anfāl. Two words: *فتنة* (*Fitnah*) and *دين* (*Dīn*) used here need our attention since both are used in many shades of meaning lexically.

At this place, two meanings have been reported from authorities of Tafsīr from among the Ṣahābah and Ṭābiʿīn: (1) That *Fitnah* is taken to mean *Kufr* and *Shirk*, and *Dīn* is taken to mean the *Dīn* of Islām. This very Tafsīr has been reported from Sayyidnā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās رضى الله عنه. Given this exegetic view, the verse would mean that Muslims must continue fighting disbelievers until disbelief disintegrates yielding its place to Islām and there remains no religion and faith other than Islām. Given this situation, this injunction will be specific to only the people of Makkah and the people of Arabia - because, the Arabian Peninsula is the home of Islām. The presence of any other religion, other than Islām in it, shall be dangerous for Islām. As for the rest of the world, other religions and faiths could be kept existing as confirmed by other verses of the Holy Qurʾān and reports from Ḥadīth.

(2) According to the second Tafsīr reported from Sayyidnā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar رضى الله عنه and others, *Fitnah* at this place means the chain of pain, retributive suffering and endless woes which the disbelievers of Makkah had always been inflicting on Muslims. As long as they were in Makkah, they kept braving all sorts of pain caused to them all the time. They could do nothing about it being virtually held by them in their clutches. When these people migrated towards Madīnah, they pursued each single Muslim and kept killing or looting them. Even after these people had reached Madīnah, the wrath and anger of the disbelievers kept showing up in the form of attacks on the whole city of Madīnah.

Set against *Fitnah*, the term *Dīn* means the state of exercising functional reach and control and prevailing over antagonists. Seen from this angle, the Tafsīr of the verse would be that Muslims must keep fighting disbelievers until fellow Muslims are delivered and secured from the tyrannies of disbelievers - and until Islām takes over so that it can defend and protect Muslims from the injustices inflicted on

them by others. An event relating to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنه also goes on to support this very Tafsīr. The report of the event says: When Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf launched an armed attack against Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Zubayr رضى الله عنه, the Amīr of Makkah, it became a strange scene. There were Muslims on both sides and their swords were swishing against each other. Seeing this, a couple of people came to Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنه and said to him: Here you are watching the horror Muslims are in, although you are the son of Sayyidnā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضى الله عنه who was not one of those who would ever tolerate such evil generating disorder. Why is it that you would not come out to remove this *Fitnah*? Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنه said: The reason is that Allah Ta‘ālā has decreed that shedding the blood of any Muslim is forbidden. Both of them countered him by saying: Do you not recite the verse of the Qur‘ān: قَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ (Fight them until there is no *Fitnah* [disorder or disbelief] any more - 39)? Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنه said: Of course, I do recite this verse - and act in accordance with it as well. We continued fighting disbelievers as commanded in this verse until came the time when there remained no *Fitnah* anymore, and Islām became the dominant *Dīn*. Now, here are people like you who wish to kill each other and plant the *Fitnah* all over again, as a result of which, everything other than Allah will come to reign supreme, and that which thus reigns supreme shall be counter to the true faith, our *Dīn*. What he meant to say was that the command to wage Jihād, fight and kill, was against the *Fitnah* of disbelief and the tyranny of the disbelievers - that they had done, and continued doing so until that *Fitnah* was eliminated. Now to apply this state of affairs as an analogy to fit forms of infighting among Muslims themselves was not sound logic. In fact, at a time when Muslims fight and kill each other, the instructions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are: 'In such a situation one who keeps sitting is better than one who stands up.'

Summarizing this Tafsīr, it can be said that Jihād, fighting and killing against the enemies of Islām was *Wājib* (necessary) on Muslims until the *Fitnah* of their tyranny unleashed on Muslims is eliminated, and Islām's ascendancy stands established over all other orders - and this outcome will come to pass only close to *Qiyāmah*, therefore, the injunction of Jihād is valid and operative right through the Last Day of *Qiyāmah*.

Two things could result from Jihād against the enemies of Islām: (1) That they stop being oppressive to Muslims, either by entering the Islāmic brotherhood and becoming brothers-in-faith, or by remaining attached to their religion, they stop harassing and hurting Muslims and enter into a treaty of allegiance.

(2) That they reject both options and stick to their policy of confrontation. Injunctions covering both options have been mentioned in the next verse (40). It was said:

فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

So, if they desist, then, Allah is indeed watchful over what they do.

It means that Allah Ta'ālā would deal with them in the light of their conduct. Put simply, if they desisted, Jihād action against them will be suspended. Under this arrangement, Muslims may have apprehended danger from the disbelievers. Their readiness to sign a peace pact or their declaration to have become Muslims soon after the encounter of mutual killing may have possibly appeared to Muslims as nothing but some strategy of deception usually employed in wars. In a situation like that, stopping the ongoing war could have been harmful for Muslims. The answer to this apprehension was given by saying that Muslims are bound by deeds they see outwardly. The one who looks into hearts and knows their hidden secrets is none but Allah Ta'ālā Himself. Therefore, when disbelievers declare their adherence to Islām or make a peace pact, Muslims have no choice but that they stop fighting and killing in Jihād. As for personal doubts about whether or not they have accepted Islām, or peace, honestly from their heart or all this is a cover for deception - these are things which fall in the domain of Allah. He knows it well that should they do something like that, they will be taken care of in some other way. Muslims should not lay the foundation of their matters and dealings on such thoughts and apprehensions.

If hands were raised against them after their declaration of Islām or pact of peace, those waging Jihād would turn into criminals - as it appears in a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. There, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said that he has been commanded to fight the enemies of Islām until they accept the Kalimah: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (There is no god worthy of worship but Allah, Muḥammad is a Messenger of Allah), establish Ṣalāh and pay Zakāh. When they have done that, their life and property shall all become protected.¹ The only exception shall be that of a punishment given to them against a crime under the Islāmic Law. What remains of the accountability of their hearts - whether they are accepting the creeds and deeds of Islām heartily or that they are doing it hypocritically - shall be resting with Allah.

According to another Ḥadīth which Abū Dāwūd has reported from several noble Companions, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Whoever does any injustice to a peace pact beneficiary (a person who has entered into a pact of allegiance with the Islāmic government) or brings him any harm, or makes him do something which is more than what he can physically do, or takes something from him without his genuine, heart-felt consent, then, on the Day of Judgement, I shall support that peace pact beneficiary against a Muslim who has done something like that.

The present verse of the Holy Qur'an under study along with reports from Ḥadīth have obviously exposed Muslims to a political danger. Think of an arch enemy who happens to be at their mercy. Just to save his life, the enemy recites the Kalimah of Islām. Right there, Muslims have been obligated to hold their hands instantly. One may think: With this style of combat, Muslims would be unable to overcome just about any enemy! But, Allah Ta'ālā has His own ways of doing things. Here, He has taken the hidden secrets of their hearts as His area of responsibility. In a miraculous manner, it has been demonstrated practically that Muslims never faced such an embarrassing situation in any of their battlefields. However, there have been hundreds of hypocrites in a state of peace who cheated, passed on as Muslims, even went about fulfilling the obligations of Ṣalāh and Ṣawm at least outwardly. Some of the miserably graceless among them had no other objective in sight but that they would exact a few benefits from Mus-

1. It should be recalled that this principle is restricted to the Arabian Peninsula, where no disbeliever is allowed to live as a permanent citizen. In other parts of the world, the disbelievers may opt for *jizyah* and may continue to profess their own religion, the punishment of their disbelief being deferred to the Hereafter. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

lims and remain safe from their revenge despite nursing hostility in their hearts. Then, there were some of those too who were doing so with political motives of spying on Muslims, find their secrets and maintain conspiratorial liaison with enemies. But, such was the Divine law that it instructed Muslims to treat all of them as they would treat Muslims - unless it was proved that they had themselves betrayed their hostility to Islām or contravened the peace agreement.

This teaching of Islām applied to the condition in which the enemies of Islām promise to desist from their hostility and enter into agreement to that effect.

The second condition is that they stick to their doggedness and hostility. The injunction covering this situation appears in the later verse (40) where it was said: *وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ يَنْصُرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَنَعِمَ النَّصِيرُ* (And if they turn away, then, be sure that Allah is your protector. He is the an excellent protector and excellent supporter).

In brief, if they fail to desist from their tyranny and disbelief, the injunction Muslims are obligated with is the same as stated above, that is, continue fighting them. Since Jihād involves fighting and killing, it is usually associated with a big army, ample weapons and other hardware and logistic support. But, those days Muslims did not have much of this normally, therefore, it was possible that Muslims would have found this command to fight and kill somewhat heavy, or their lack of numbers or paucity of equipment may have led them to realize that they could not win a war like that. Therefore, Muslims were given the antidote they needed. They were told that it did not matter if the disbelievers had more men and equipment to fight with, but where in the world were they going to get the unseen support and help of Allah Ta'ālā which Muslims have with them and which they have been witnessing as being alongwith them on every battlefield. Then, towards the end it was said that, for all practical purposes, everyone in the world finds some help and support from someone or somewhere, but the touchstone of how effective and functionally superior it is depends on the power, strength, knowledge and experience of that helper or supporter. It goes without saying that a whole world-full of people could never exceed, even equal the power and strength and knowledge and perception of Allah Ta'ālā because He is an excellent protector and an excellent supporter with no one to match Him.

Verse 41

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي
 الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ
 بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّفَٰيِ الْجُمُعَةِ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾

And know that whatever spoils you receive, its one fifth is for Allah and His Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, if you do believe in Allah and in what We have sent down upon Our Servant on the decisive day, the day the two forces met. And Allah is powerful over everything. [41]

Commentary

Mentioned in this verse are injunctions of spoils and the law of their distribution. Before we take up the subject in detail, let us understand some important words first.

Lexically, the word: غنيمه (*ghanimah*) is applied to property which is acquired from the enemy. In the terminology of the Shari'ah, property which is acquired from non-Muslims through fighting and killing, triumph and control, is called: غنيمه (*ghanimah*, translated here as spoils). And the property which is acquired in peace and with consent, like: خراج *Jizyah*, *Khiraaj* etc., is called: فية (*fai*). These two words have been used to describe injunctions of these two kinds in the Holy Qur'an. The present Sūrah al-Anfāl takes up injunctions relating to *ghanimah* or spoils which is acquired from non-Muslims at the time of fighting and killing.

At this point, we should first keep in mind that, according to the Islāmic and Qur'ānic view of things, the real ownership of the entire universe belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, the one and only Being who has created whatever there is in it. The only way through which the ownership of something can be attributed to human beings is no other but that Allah Ta'ālā may have Himself declared it, through His Law, to be under the ownership of someone. For instance, while mentioning quadruped animals in Sūrah Yā Sīn (23:71), it was said: أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنَّا صَبَٰغًا يَمْشُونَ (Do they see not that We created the quadrupeds

with Our Own hands then they became their owners?) As obvious, the sense is that this ownership of theirs is not private and personal - it was Allah who made them the owners out of His grace.

When some set of people rebels against Allah Ta'ālā, that is, indulges in Kufr and Shirk, then, the first action Allah Ta'ālā takes to reform them is that He sends His Messengers and Books to them. When the unfortunate ones among them are not impressed even by this act of Divine grace, Allah Ta'ālā commands His Messengers to wage Jihād against them and kill them. The outcome of this was that the lives and properties of these rebels became *Mubāḥ* (allowed). They no longer had the right to benefit from the assets of life and property given to them by Allah Ta'ālā, instead, in a manner of saying, all that belonged to them was confiscated in the name of the Authority in command. These very confiscated properties are given the name of *ghanīmah*, spoils or war booty - which went out of the ownership of disbelievers and deposited itself separately as being under the ownership of Allah Ta'ālā alone.

According to the ancient Divine Law which governed such confiscated properties, no one was allowed to benefit from them. Such properties were, rather, gathered and placed on some open spot where lightening would come from the heavens and burn these up. This was the sign that their effort by way of Jihād was accepted.

One of the few unique distinctions bestowed upon the Last of the Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم by Allah Ta'ālā was that *ghanīmah* properties (spoils) were made lawful (*ḥalāl*) for the Muslim community (as in a Ḥadīth of Muslim). And such was the quality of its lawfulness that it was classed as 'the purest of properties!' The reason for it is not far to find. Is it not that wealth and property which one acquires through hard labour comes to him under his ownership after having passed through chains after chains of transfers from the ownership of many human beings? Now, while passing through these numerous chains, there exists a strong probability of unlawful, impermissible or repugnant methods being employed somewhere in the pipeline. The case of *ghanīmah* or spoils happens to be quite contrary. Here, the ownership of disbelievers stands severed from them and passes directly into the ownership of Allah Ta'ālā, remaining there as such. Now, whoever gets it, gets it directly from what is owned by Allah Ta'ālā and that leaves

no doubt, or apprehension of unlawfulness or repugnance as could be the case in receiving from what is owned by human beings. This is like water drawn from a well, or natural grass, which reaches man directly as a blessing of Allah Ta'ālā without any human intermediacy in between.

To sum up, it can be said that *ghanīmah* or spoils which was not lawful for past communities was made lawful as a token of blessing and mercy for the Muslim Ummah. The rule of its distribution has been introduced by saying: **وَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ** (And know that whatever spoils you receive - 41). To begin with, according to the rules of Arabic language, the word: **مَا** (*mā*) already signifies generality. Then, to put further stress on this generality, added there was the expression: **مِنْ شَيْءٍ** (*min sha'i*) which means whatever is collected as spoils, big or small, falls under the purview of this very law. Anyone who takes anything outside the provisions of the law of distribution, even if ordinary or small in his judgement, he will still be considered guilty of a serious crime. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that it is not permissible for anyone to take even a needle and its thread which is a part of the spoils (*ghanīmah* property) without his entitlement to it as his legally allotted share. In addition to that, he has given a severe warning against taking anything from spoils outside the allotted share. The name given to this act of misappropriation in spoils in Ḥadīth is *Ghulūl* where it has been declared as brazenly unlawful, far more serious than common theft.

By introducing the ground rule for distribution, all *mujāhid* Muslims were served with a notice that Allah Ta'ālā has made spoils lawful for them, but that it was lawful under a specific procedural regulation. Anyone who takes anything against it, then, that will be nothing but an ember of the fire of Jahannam.

This is what makes the law of the Qur'ān distinct from other laws of the world. Then, this is the real secret behind the perfect effectiveness and success of the law of Qur'ān when it begins by focusing on the need to fear Allah and to be concerned about the Hereafter and follows it up with warnings of consequences. After that, as part of the next article, penal punishments were also promulgated.

Otherwise, it is worth pondering how is it possible in the middle of the wild commotion of the battlefield that properties be acquired from

out of the possession of non-Muslims, properties the details of which are known neither to the commander of Muslims nor to someone else. On top of that, battles are fought on grounds which form part of desolate jungles and deserts where thousands of places exist as possible hideouts far from the arm of law. To stand guard over these properties with the sole strength of law was something just not possible for anyone. Ultimately, it was the fear of Allah and Ākhirah alone which enabled every single Muslim to desist from making even the minutest misappropriation in these properties.

Now, let us have a look at this rule of distribution. It was said: **فَأَنزَلَ لَكُمُ** **حُكْمَهُ** وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ (its one fifth is for Allah and the Messenger and for kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer - 41).

First of all, worth pondering at this point is that the rule of the distribution of *ghanimah* or spoils being described here covers the distribution of spoils as a whole. But, the Qur'an has elected to simply mention the rule as it applies to its one-fifth. No mention has been made of the remaining four shares. What is the secret behind it and what is the law which governs the distribution of the rest of four shares? If we ponder over and deliberate in the Qur'an, an answer to these two questions comes out from within the existing word arrangement of the text. To wit, addressing Muslims engaged in Jihād, the Holy Qur'an said: **مَا غَنِمْتُمْ** (*mā ghanīmtum* : whatever spoils you receive). There is a hint here to the effect that this property is the right of those who receive it. And after that, it was declared that one fifth from it was the share of Allah and the Messenger and others. Thus, the outcome is all too clear - the remaining four shares belonged to the *mujāhidīn* and to those who collected spoils among them. This is similar to what the Qur'an has said elsewhere in connection with the law of inheritance:

وَوَرِثَهُ أَبَوَاهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ

And his parents have inherited him, then, his mother gets the one-third. (4:11)

Here too, the mention of mother has been considered sufficient which tells us that the remaining two shares are the right of the father. Similarly, after mentioning: **مَا غَنِمْتُمْ** (*mā ghanīmtum* : whatever spoils you receive), when only one fifth share was set aside for Allah, it became

clear that the remaining four shares were the right of the *mujāhidīn*. Later, the corresponding word and deed of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم fully clarified the rule in details that these four shares were distributed over *mujāhidīn* under a specific law.

Now, let us take up the details of that one fifth share which has been clearly determined by the Holy Qur'ān in this verse. The count of words used in the Qur'ān to say this here is six. The six words are: (1) لِلَّهِ (*lillāh* : for Allah), (2) لِلرَّسُولِ (*lirrasūl* : for the Messenger), (3) لِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ (*lidhilqurbā* : for kinsmen), (4) الْيَتَىٰ (*al-yatāmā* : orphans), (5) الْمَسْكِينِ (*al-masākīn* : the needy) and (6) ابْنِ السَّبِيلِ (*ibn as-sabīl* : the wayfarer).

Out of these words, the first word: لله (*lillāh*) serves as the main heading under which this one fifth shall be disbursed. In other words, the statement made is that all these disbursements are exclusively for the sake of Allah. Then, the introduction of this word at this place carries a particular wisdom of its own which has been pointed out to in Tafsīr Maḥzarī. It has been said there that wealth and property coming out of *ṣadaqāt* (charities) had been declared unlawful for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his family since it did not suit his station as a prophet of Allah, and also because it was a portion taken out from the wealth and properties of Muslims at large for the purpose of making these purified. The name given to such give outs in Ḥadīth is: اوساخ الناس (*awsākhu 'n-nās* : dirt removed from people). This is not fit for the high status of a prophet.

Since this verse has also given a share out of the one fifth of spoils to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his family, therefore, it was particularly stressed that this share did not wind its way through what was owned by people, instead, it was directly from Allah Ta'ālā - as mentioned a little earlier that the property of *ghanimah* or spoils goes out from the ownership of disbelievers and passes directly into the sole ownership of Allah Ta'ālā. Thereafter, it is distributed as a reward from Him. Therefore, to indicate that the share given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his kinsmen from the one fifth of spoils had nothing to do with charities given by people, instead, was grace and reward directly from Allah Ta'ālā, it was said at the beginning of the verse: لِلَّهِ (*lillāh*) which means that all this property belongs to Allah Ta'ālā, really and specifically, and it will be disbursed according to His command alone on heads as determined.

So, there remain five real categories of disbursement from this one fifth - the Messenger, the kinsmen, the orphan, the needy and the wayfarer. Then, there are different degrees of entitlement among them. One marvels at the eloquence of the Holy Qur'ān as to how delicately it has described the difference in their degrees of entitlement. For instance, the intensifying particle: لام (*lām*) has been affixed before the first two of these five as in: لِلرَّسُولِ وَلِلَّذِي الْقُرْبَى (for the Messenger and for the kinsmen) - and the rest of the three kinds have been conjoined together and mentioned without the particle *lām*.

The particle *lām* is used for particularization in the Arabic language. In the word: لِلَّهِ (*lillāh*), the particle *lām* denotes exclusivity of ownership which means that Allah Ta'ālā is the real owner of everything - and in: لِلرَّسُولِ (*lirrasūl*), the objective is to highlight the speciality of entitlement since Allah Ta'ālā bestowed the right of disbursing and distributing the one fifth of spoils on the noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The purport of this arrangement has been ably stated by Imām Ṭaḥāwī and Tafsīr Maẓharī when they said: Though, five names have been mentioned at this place with reference to the heads of disbursement of one fifth of spoils but, in reality, the entire right of disposal rests with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who shall expend the one fifth of spoils over these five categories at his discretion. This is similar to what was said in the first verse of Sūrah al-Anfāl where the injunction about the entire collection of spoils was that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had the right to expend it where he wished or give it to whom he wished, all at his discretion.

Though, the verse (41) وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ (And know that whatever spoils you receive) by dividing the whole of spoils over five shares, declared that four of these were the right of the *mujāhidīn*, but the fifth share continued to be governed by the same injunction which had left its disbursement at the discretion of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. However, the only addition made there was that five heads of expenditure relating to this fifth share were spelt out and that it will keep revolving within these. But, according to the majority of expert scholars, it was not incumbent on him that he should make five equal shares out of this one fifth and distribute it equally over the five categories of recipients mentioned in the verse. Instead, what was necessary was no more than that he would give the one fifth of spoils within the same

five categories, to all, or to some, at his discretion.

The clearest proof of this statement lies within the words of the verse and the categories of recipients it mentions. It means that all these categories are not practically separate and detached from each other. In fact, they can be common to each other. For instance, a person who falls under the category of 'kinsmen,' could also be an 'orphan', or 'needy' and 'wayfarer' too. Similarly, the needy and the wayfarer could also be orphans, and kinsmen too. Someone needy could also have the status of a wayfarer. If the purpose was to have spoils distributed equally and separately over all these categories, then, these categories should have been such as would not admit one category of person in the other. Otherwise, it would become necessary that a person who is from kinsmen and who also happens to be an orphan, a needy one and a wayfarer too will have to be given four shares at the rate of one share for each status. Incidentally, this is the governing rule in the distribution of inheritance. Someone who has different kinds of relationship with a deceased person gets a separate share against each such relationship. Nevertheless, giving four shares to one person is something no one in the Muslim community goes by. This tells us that the verse does not aim to put a restriction of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that he necessarily gives to all these categories and gives equally too. Instead, the aim is that he may give out of the one fifth of spoils to any category from the five categories specified as he deems fit and appropriate. (Tafsīr Mazharī)

This is illustrated by an incident relating to Sayyidah Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها. When she requested the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that she be given a servant to help her with home chores in view of her physical weakness, he refused to accept her request on the ground that, in his sight, the need of his Companions from the people of Şuffah was more urgent than hers. They were extremely poor and needy and there was no way he could bypass them and give to her. (Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

From here, it becomes very clear that there was no separate right or entitlement for each category, otherwise, who could have been more deserving than Sayyidah Fāṭimah in the category of kinsfolk? In brief, all this is a description of the heads of disbursements, and not a description of entitlements.

The Distribution of One Fifth (*Khums*) after the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم

According to the majority of Imāms, the share assigned to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in the one fifth of spoils was, in terms of his august station as a prophet and messenger. This was very similar to the special right given to him that he could pick and take anything from out of the total spoils for his personal use, because of which he had actually taken certain things from out of some spoils. Then, he took care of his expenses and the expenses of his family from the one fifth of spoils. After his passing away, this share ceased to exist automatically - because, there is no messenger or prophet after him.

The *Khums* (one fifth) of *Dhawi 'l-Qurbā* (the kinsmen)

At least, there is no difference of opinion about the precedence of the right of poor kinsmen in the one fifth of spoils as compared to that of other categories of receivers, that is, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. The reason is that poor kinsmen cannot be helped with *Zakāh* and *Ṣadaqāt*, while other categories of receivers could also be helped with *Zakāh* and *Ṣadaqāt* (as clarified in *Al-Hidāyah* where precedence is given to poor kins folk over other categories). However, the question remains whether or not the need-free kinsmen would be given from it. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says: Whatever the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself used to give to kinsmen was based on two considerations: (1) Their need and poverty and (2) help and support given to him in establishing faith and defending Islām. The second cause came to an end with the passing away of the Prophet. What remained was the consideration of need and poverty. As based on this aspect, every Imām and Amīr of Muslims shall keep granting them precedence over others (*Hidāyah*, *al-Jaṣṣaṣ*). Imām Shāfi'ī has also taken the same position. (Qurtubī)

And according to some Muslim jurists (*fuqahā*), the share of kinsmen in their capacity as being related to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم remains valid for ever. Included there are the poor and the need-free all alike, however, the ruling Muslim authority of the time shall give them a share at his discretion. (Maḥzarī)

The real factor in this matter is the conduct and practice of the rightly-guided *Khulafā'* of Islām in terms of what they did after the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. This author of *Hidāyah*

has this to say about it:

ان الخلفاء الاربعة الراشدين قسموه على ثلاثة اسهم

(After the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the four rightly-guided Khulafā' have distributed the one fifth of spoils over three categories only (that is, orphan, needy, and wayfarer).

However, it stands proved about Sayyidnā 'Umar صلى الله عليه وسلم that he used to give out to poor kinsmen from the one fifth of spoils (deduced by Abū Dāwūd) - and it is obvious that this is not peculiar to Sayyidnā 'Umar alone, other Khulafā' would have also been doing the same.

As for the narrations which prove that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنهم اجمعين used to take out the rightful share of kinsmen right through the later period of their Caliphate and had these distributed through Sayyidnā 'Alī as custodian on their behalf (as in a narration of Kitāb al-Kharāj by Imām Abū Yūsuf), it is not contrary to that distribution being particular to poor kinsmen. Allah knows best.

Special Note

The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had himself determined the qualification of kinsmen through his deed when, apart from Banū Hāshim which was his own tribe, he had associated Banū al-Muṭṭalib too with them for the reason that they had never separated themselves from Banū Hāshim whether in Jāhiliyyah or Islām - so much so that at the time the Quraysh of Makkah had cut off food supplies to Banū Hāshim and had confined them to Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, the Banū al-Muṭṭalib were though not included under those boycotted, yet they joined Banū Hāshim in this trial. (Maḡharī)

The Day of the Battle of Badr was the Day of Distinction

In this verse, the day of Badr has been called Yowm al-Furqān (the day of distinction between the true and the false). The reason is that Muslims scored a clear victory at Badr and the disbelievers faced a disgraceful defeat. Though, this happened as a ground reality on that day, yet it was, by extension, a day of decision also, the ultimate decision between disbelief and Islām.

Verses 42 - 44

إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدُوَّةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدُوَّةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَا خْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِنْ لَيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ

أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۚ لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ
عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ إِذْ يُرِيدُكَ اللَّهُ فِي
مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَادَ كَثِيرًا لَفَشَلْتُمْ وَتَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي
الْأَمْرِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِذْ
يُرِيدُكُمْ هُمْ إِذْ اتَّقَيْتُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِي
أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضَىٰ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ
الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

And (remember) when you were on the nearest cliff, and they were on the farthest one, and the caravan was downwards from you. And had you re-arranged it with each other, you would have deviated from the appointment. But (it happened like this) so that Allah might accomplish what was destined to be done, so that whoever is going to die may die knowingly, and whoever is going to live may live knowingly. And Allah is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [42]

And when in your dream, Allah showed them to you few in number. And if He had shown them to you many in number, you would have been demoralized and would have disputed in the matter, but Allah saved (you). Surely, Allah is All-Aware of what lies in the hearts. [43]

And when, at the time you met each other, He showed them to you few in number in your eyes, and reduced your number in their eyes, so that Allah might accomplish what was destined to be done. And to Allah all matters are returned. [44]

Commentary

The battle of Badr was the first confrontation of Kufr and Islām which registered a practical proof of the superiority and veracity of Islām, even visibly and materially. Therefore, the Holy Qurʾān has taken special steps to describe its details which appear in the verses cited above. Besides the many considerations of wisdom behind these details, one such consideration is to assert that there was just no possibility, either visibly or technically, that Muslims will win and that the

disbelievers of Makkah will be defeated. But, the unseen power of Allah Ta'ālā overturned all superiority of men and materials as well as its obvious causes. To give a clear picture of this event, the Holy Qur'an has virtually outlined in these verses a whole map of the battlefront at Badr. Now, before we explain these verses, let us glance over the lexical explanation of some words.

The word: عُدْوَة ('udwah) refers to a side and the word: دُنْيَا (dunyā) is derived from: أَذْنَى (adnā) which means nearer. When compared to the Hereafter, this world of ours is also called: دُنْيَا (dunyā) because, as related to the universe of the Hereafter, it is closer at hand for human beings. And the word: قُصْوَى (quṣwā) is a derivation from: أَقْصَى (aqṣā) which means farther.

In verse 42, death has been mentioned against life. The Arabic words used here do not carry the outward sense of death and life. Instead, meant here is spiritual death and life, or destruction and salvation. Spiritual life is Islām (belief in Allah and the Messenger) and 'Imān (faith), and spiritual death is Shirk (polytheism) and Kufr (disbelief). The Holy Qur'an has used these words at several places in this very sense. For instance, earlier in Sūrah al-Anfāl, it was said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

O those who believe, respond to Allah and the Messenger when He calls you to what gives you life. (8:24).

The life mentioned here is the real and eternal life which one is blessed with in return for 'Imān and Islām. Now, we can move to a detailed explanation of the cited verses.

Opening with almost a cartographic view of the war front at Badr, verse 42 tells us that Muslims were on the nearest cliff (عُدْوَة دُنْيَا) and the disbelievers were on the farthest one (عُدْوَة قُصْوَى). The spot occupied by Muslims was on the side of the terrain closer to Madīnah, while the disbelievers had taken the other side of the terrain which was farther from Madīnah. As for the trade caravan of Abū Sufyān, the main cause of waging this Jihād, that too was closer to the army of disbelievers which had come from Makkah but was out of the range of attack by Muslims and moving by the sea shore at a distance of three miles. The purpose of focusing on this battle plan is to say that Muslims were located at a spot totally unsuitable and wrong strategically, a spot from

where they had no chance of overpowering the enemy, in fact, no chance of even saving their own lives - because, the side of the terrain which was closer to Madīnah happened to be a big sandy patch walking through which was hard and heavy. Then, they had no access to water around the spot they were in, while the side farther from Madīnah where the disbelievers had set up their camps was smooth terrain with a supply of water close by.

Then, by pointing out to the two edges of the sides occupied by the two armies, it was made much too clear that the two forces were standing face to face, under which condition, it was not possible to conceal the strength or weakness of one party from the other. In addition to that, it was also indicated that the army of the disbelievers of Makkah was already at peace with the realization that their trade caravan had moved away from the attacking range of Muslims. Now, if they needed them at some stage, they too could come out to help them. As compared to them, Muslims were in trouble in terms of their location where they had no probability of getting support of men and materials from anywhere. Then, it is already settled, and known to every educated Muslim, that the total count of Muslim 'army' was three hundred and thirteen, while that of the disbelievers was one thousand. Muslims did not have sufficient number of mounts, nor did they have enough weapons. Against that, the army of the disbelievers was laced with everything.

Besides, Muslims simply had not embarked on this Jihād as some armed force ready to fight a war. Being an emergency measure to block the passage of a trade caravan and to lower the morale of the enemy, only three hundred and thirteen Muslims had started off ill-prepared, ill-equipped. It was only all of a sudden that there they stood having to confront a thousand-strong force of armed men.

This verse of the Qur'ān tells us that this event, though it came to pass accidentally, with no intention behind it, but the truth is that all that happens in this world, accidentally and involuntarily - though, it looks like some plain accident in terms of its level and form - is, in the sight of the Creator of the universe, nothing but the well-set chain of a formidable system. There is nothing in this system which can be called abrupt or out of place. It will take the whole system to unravel itself to man, only then, man could find out the full range of wisdom hidden be-

hind what was, supposedly, an accidental happening.

Take this event of the battle of Badr as a test case. That it came to pass in an accidental and involuntary manner had its own wise considerations as stated in: وَلَوْ تَرَاءَىٰ تُنْمَ لَا تُخَلَّفُنَّ فِي السِّبَا (And had you re-arranged it with each other, you would have deviated from the appointment - 42). It means that, had this battle also been fought like common battles around the world, fought with all possible survey of available options, mutual arguments and crisis resolutions, then, given the dictates of circumstances, this battle would have never been fought. In fact, differences would have crept in one way or the other - either, Muslims themselves would have started thinking otherwise because of their being few and weak against adversaries who were many and strong; or that both parties, the disbelievers and the Muslims, might have not shown up on the battle ground as appointed mutually. As for Muslims, they would have not had the courage to initiate action in view of their being few and weak - and the disbelievers, in whose hearts Allah Ta'ālā had already put the awe of Muslims, would have been scared to come out against them despite their superiority in number and strength.

Therefore, that formidable Divine system created such conditions on both sides as would not allow them time and occasion to think and understand. The people of Makkah were so overwhelmed by the disturbing plaint from the trade caravan of Abū Sufyān that they were ready to march out without much deliberation. The Muslims were prompted by the thought that they were going to take care of an ordinary trade caravan and not a formal armed force arrayed against them. But, Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, so willed that a war starts between them so that the consequences of the victory of Islām which are to emerge from behind this war become visibly manifest. Therefore, it was said: وَلَكِنْ يَفْضِلُ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مُتَعَرِّفًا (But [it happened like this] so that Allah might accomplish what was destined to be done - 42). It means that, despite conditions being what they were, the war had to be fought so that Allah might accomplish what was destined to be done. And destined to be done was that arrayed against an army of armed and equipped youngmen a thousand-strong, a motely group of three hundred and thirteen ill-equipped and hunger-stricken Muslims - and that too out of place in terms of the demanding war front - rams

itself against what was a virtual mountain for them, then, the unbelievable happens. The mountain turns into smithereens. This insignificant group of men wins. This is nothing but an all too visible demonstration of the fact that some big power was operating behind them, something that thousand-strong army missed. Then, it is also evident that Muslims were supported because of Islām and the disbelievers remained deprived because of their disbelief, something which gave every sensible human a criterion to distinguish truth from evil and genuine from the fake. Therefore, at the end of the verse, it was said: **إِنَّكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَىٰ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ** (so that whoever is going to die may die knowingly, and whoever is going to live may live knowingly - 42). It means that the loud and clear veracity of Islām vis-a-vis the falsity and horror of Kufr and Shirk was exposed for ever so that anyone who opts for destruction should do so while fully realizing the consequences of his or her action, and anyone who goes on to live should also live with full realization of the choice so made. The caveat is: Let nothing be done unknowingly and mistakenly, so be on guard.

The word: **هَلَكَ** (*halākah* : death, destruction) in this verse means Kufr or disbelief while **حَيَات** (*hayāt* : life) denotes Islām. In other words, once the truth has come out in the open, the probability and excuse of misunderstanding stand eliminated. Now, whoever takes to disbelief as his or her life style is going towards destruction with open eyes. And whoever takes to Islām takes to eternal life knowingly, consciously and deliberately. Then, it was said: **وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ** (And Allah is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing - 42) that is, He knows the secrets in everyone's heart, even the nature of everyone's belief and disbelief, as well as the due reward and punishment for it.

Mentioned in verses 43 and 44, there is particular marvel of Divine power which was designed to take place at the battle of Badr for the express purpose of making sure that none of the two armies were to put an end to the war itself by deserting the battlefield - because, it was as a result of this very war that the manifestation of the veracity of Islām was destined even as a ground reality, all earthy, material.

Such was the nature of this Divine marvel that the army of the disbelievers which was though three times larger than that of Muslims, yet Allah Ta'ālā, by His perfect power alone, made their number appear much less to Muslims so that it may not cause any difference of

opinion or sense of weakness to affect them. This event took place twice. Once, it was shown to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in a dream which he related to all of them and which renewed their courage and resolve. The second time, when the two groups stood facing each other on the battlefield itself, their number was shown to Muslims as being small. The event mentioned in verse 43 relates to the dream and that in verse 44 to a state when they were wide awake.

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضى الله عنه says: In our sight, the army facing us looked as if - as I said to the man next to me - these people would be ninety in number. That man said: No, they must be a hundred.

In the last verse, along with this, it has also been mentioned: يَغْلِبْكُمْ فَبَرَأْنَاهُمْ (and reduced your number in their eyes - 44). This could also mean that Muslims were, in reality, already few in number, thus, what was shown to disbelievers was their number as it was. And it could also mean that the number shown to them was much reduced than it really was - as it appears in many narrations that Abū Jahl on seeing the Muslim 'army' said to his compatriots: The number of these people does not seem to be any more than the number who would eat a camel as their daily ration. In Arabia of those days, the measure used to find out the number of men in an army was to first guess the number of animals slaughtered for their meals. One camel was understood to be sufficient to feed one hundred people. Right here on this battle site of Badr, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, in his effort to find out the number of men in the army of the Quraysh of Makkah, had asked some local people: How many camels are slaughtered in their army camp every day? The answer given to him was: Ten camels daily. This led him to estimate the number of men in their army as being one thousand. In short, the total number of Muslims was shown as being one hundred in the sight of Abū Jahl. Here too, the wisdom of showing them in a reduced number was that the awe of Muslims may not so adversely affect the hearts of disbelievers ahead of the actual confrontation that they bolt from the battlefield itself.

Special Note

From this verse, we also find out that there are occasions when, as a matter of miracle and supernatural happening, optical observation may prove incorrect - as it transpired here.

For this very reason, the statement: لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا (so that Allah might accomplish what was destined to be done - 44) was repeated here. It means that the Divine marvel and the phenomenon of superimposition on optical observation was manifested for the reason that the will of Allah stands accomplished right upto the end, that is, by giving Muslims victory despite their lack of numbers and materials, the central objectives of this war, that is, the veracity of Islām and the expression of unseen Divine support, should be fully achieved and established for ever.

At the end of the verse, it was said: وَإِلَى اللَّهِ رُجُوعُ الْأُمُورِ (And to Allah all matters are returned - 44). It means that He does what He wills and He commands as He wills. He can make a minority overcome a majority and weakness overtake strength. He may make less become more and more become less.

Verses 45 - 47

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطَرًا وَرِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

O those who believe, when you face a group (in battle), stand firm and remember Allah much, so that you may be successful. [45]

And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you should show weakness and should lose your predominance, and be patient. Surely, Allah is with the patient. [46]

And do not be like those who set forth from their homes waxing proud and showing off to people, preventing (people) from the way of Allah. And Allah is All-Encompassing of what they do. [47]

Commentary

Qur'ānic Instructions for Success in Jihād

Given in the first two verses cited above is a special set of instructions for Muslims when they confront enemies on the battlefield. These instructions from Allah Ta'ālā are for them the master prescrip-

tion of success and ascendancy in the present world as well as that of salvation and prosperity in the eternal life to come. In fact, the secret of unusual successes and victories achieved by Muslims in all wars fought by them during the early period lies hidden behind their adherence to these very golden guidelines - and they are:

1. Be Steadfast

The Arabic word used by the Qur'ān is *thibāt* which means to stand firm, hold the ground, be steadfast. This includes firmness of the feet and firmness of the heart both because a person whose heart is not strong and firm can hardly be expected to have the rest of his body hold the ground. This is something everyone knows and understands, believer or disbeliever. Every nation of the world gives high priority to this strength in its wars because all experienced people know it well that the first and foremost weapon in the theater of war is nothing but the firmness of heart and feet. Without these, all weapons are rendered useless.

2. Remember Allah

The second principle is the *Dhikr* of Allah which is a weapon in its own right, special and spiritual, something known to Muslims only and not known to or neglected by the rest of the world. The world as we know it today would do anything to get together state-of-the-art weapon systems for their war plans, the latest in logistics and morale boosting sessions to inculcate combat firmness among forces - but, strangely enough, it is unaware and unexposed to this spiritual weapon of Muslims. This is the reason why Muslims, wherever they had to confront some other nation while following these instructions precisely as given, they were able to demolish superior forces of the adversary laced with men, weapons and war materials. As for the inherent spiritual benediction of the *Dhikr* of Allah, they have a place of their own in our lives, nevertheless, it is also difficult to deny its efficacy in enabling one to continue to hold on and remain standing firm on his feet. To remember Allah and to be confident about it is like a highly charged electronic energy which makes a weak person run through mountains. No matter what the odds be against, personal discomfort or emotional anxiety, this remembrance of Allah shoos all that into thin air making the heart of man strong and his feet firm.

At this stage, let us keep in mind that the time of a raging battle is

usually a terrible time when no one remembers anyone and everyone is consumed with the thought of self-preservation. Therefore, the poets of pagan Arabia take great pride in insisting that they remember their beloved even during the heat of the battlefield. To them, this was a proof of the power of heart and the firmness of love. A pagan poet has said: ذكرك والخطى يخطر بيننا (I remembered you even at a time when spears were swinging dangerously between us).

The Holy Qur'ān has prompted Muslims to engage in the Dhikr of Allah even in this dangerous situation, and that too with the emphasis on : كَثِيرًا (*kathīra* : much).

Also worth pondering over at this point is the fact that no other act of worship (*Tbādah*), except the Dhikr of Allah, has been commanded in the entire Qur'ān with the instruction that it be done abundantly and profusely. Expressions like : صَلَاةٌ كَثِيرًا (making Ṣalāh much) and: صِيَامًا كَثِيرًا (fasting much) have not been mentioned anywhere. The reason is that the Dhikr of Allah is easy to do, a convenient act of worship indeed. You do not have to spend a lot of time and labour doing it, nor does it stop you from doing something else on hand. On top of that, this is an exclusive grace from Allah Ta'ālā who has not placed any pre-condition or restriction of Wudū (ablution), Ṭahārah (state of purity from major or minor impurities), dress and orientation to Qiblah (facing the direction of Ka'bah) etc. in its performance. This can be done by anyone under all states, with Wudū or without, standing, sitting or lying down. And if we were to add to it the higher investigative approach of Imām al-Jazrī appearing in the famous collection of authentic Islāmic prayers, Ḥiṣn Ḥaṣīn, where he states that the Dhikr of Allah is not limited to the act of remembering Allah only verbally or by heart, instead of which, any permissible act which is performed by remaining within the parameters of obedience to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم shall also be counted as the Dhikr of Allah, then, given this approach, the sense of Dhikr of Allah becomes so common and easy that we could call even a man in sleep a Dhākir (one who remembers Allah). This is supported by what is said in some narrations: نَوْمُ الْعَالَمِ عِبَادَةٌ (The sleep of the 'Ālim is included under Tbādah) because an 'Ālim or scholar of Islām who lives and acts in accordance with the demands of his 'Ilm or knowledge of Islām is duty-bound to see that all his states of sleeping and waking must remain within nothing but the boundries

of obedience to Allah Ta'ālā.

In the present context, the command to remember Allah abundantly while on the battlefield may give the impression of being an addition of one more duty assigned to the *mujāhidīn*, something which may usually demand concentrated hard work. But, certainly unique is the property of the Dhikr of Allah. It does not subject its performer to what would be hard labour. Instead, it brings in a kind of pleasure, energy and taste which actually goes on to help one accomplish a lot of things one does in life. For that matter, there is nothing unusual about it as we commonly notice that people who handle hard labour would habitually take to a set of words or some beat or jingle or song and are heard humming it while working. The Holy Qur'an has blessed Muslims with an alternate for it, something which is based on countless advantages and wise considerations. Therefore, towards the end of the verse, it was said: **لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتْلِحُونَ** (so that you may be successful - 45). It means if you went on to master these two tested techniques of standing firm and remembering Allah - and used it on the battlefield - then, you can be sure that prosperity and success are all yours.

One method of remembering Allah on the battlefield is what we generally recognize as the well-known battle cry of 'Allāhu-Akbar' (the *Na'rah* or cry of *Takbīr* which is a positively voiced statement of belief in the greatness of Allah in the setting of a battlefield). Thus, saying: 'Allāhu-Akbar' is also a form of Dhikr or remembrance of Allah. In addition to this, it also includes the attitude of keeping the thought of Allah always in sight, having confidence and trust in Him and remembering Him with all your heart in it. As such, the term Dhikr of Allah includes all that.

Moving to verse 46, we see that believers have been prompted to follow a third instruction and that is: **أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ** (obey Allah and His Messenger) - because, help and support from Allah Ta'ālā can be expected to come only through obedience to Him. Negligence and disobedience can only be the causes of the displeasure of Allah and a certain deprivation from whatever grace could come from Him. Thus, we have before us three articles of the Qur'anic code of conduct for the battlefield: (1) Firmness (2) Dhikr of Allah (3) Obedience. After that, it was said: **وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَعَلَّامًا لَّتُفْسِدُوا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا** (and do not dispute, lest you should show weakness and should lose your predominance, and be patient - 46).

Given here is a warning against negative aspects of conduct which must be avoided. As for the negative conduct which impedes successful war effort, it is nothing but mutual difference and disputation. Therefore, it was said: وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا (and do not dispute - 46) for mutual dissension and discord would breed cowardice among them and they would soon lose their image of dominance.

The verse points out to two end-products of this mutual dissension: (1) That you would become personally weak and cowardly and (2) that you would lose your predominance and turn low in the sight of the enemy. The fact that mutual disputation would make disputants appear low in the sight of others is obvious, but how does it affect one's own strength to the limit that it turns into weakness and cowardice? The reason is that, given mutual unity and trust, everyone is backed up by the strength of a whole group. Therefore, one individual feels the relative strength of his whole group in himself and once that mutual unity and trust is gone what remains behind is no more than his own solitary strength - which, obviously, means nothing in a killing field.

After that, it was said: وَاصْبِرْ (and be patient - 46). Looking at the context of the statement, this appears to have been suggested as a successful prescription of remaining safe from getting involved in dissension and disputes. To elucidate, it can be said that no matter how united in thinking and objectives a group may be, but physical traits of human individuals remain different after all. Then, the divergence of opinion among the informed and experienced in the process of achieving a certain purpose is also inevitable. Therefore, in order to go along with others and to keep them together, there is no alternative but that one should be used to remaining patient over counter-temperamental matters of concern and being accustomed to ignoring them when necessary. In other words, one should not be so rigid and uncompromising over his personal opinion that, in the event it was not accepted, he would explode and fight. *Sabr* or patience is just another name for this quality of resilience. These days everyone knows and says that mutual dispute is very bad, but the master stroke of remaining safe from it - that one trains himself to become used to remaining patient over what does not match his physical temperament and that he does not worry about making people say yes to his view and see that they go by it - is something very few people have learnt to employ successfully. As a re-

sult, all sermons of unity and harmony are rendered useless. So, it can be conceded that one does not normally have the capability to make the other person surrender to his view, but two things still remain possible: (1) That he himself accepts what the other person has to say (2) and should the dictate of his reason and justice goad him not to accept it, then, the least he could still do is to say nothing for the sake of averting a possible dispute. This much is, after all, within one's power and control. Therefore, alongwith the instruction to avoid dissension and dispute, the Holy Qur'an has also exhorted every individual of a group to observe patience so that avoiding disputes becomes easy in practice.

Also worth pondering at this stage is the statement made in the Qur'an when it has said: لَا تَنَازَعُوا (and do not dispute - 46). Here, it has stopped mutual disputation, not any difference of opinion or its expression. Difference of opinion which is prompted by honesty and sincerity never develops into disputation. Quarrels and disputations are generated when things go beyond ordinary difference of opinion, particularly when gripped by the emotional attitude of making the other person accept what one says and not to accept what the other person does. And this emotional attitude is what the Holy Qur'an has eliminated by saying: وَاصْبِرُوا (and be patient - 46). Then, at the end, by pointing out to the most sublime gain to be made from the observance of patience, it removes whatever unpalatable there may be about it. It was said: إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ (Allah is with the patient - 46). That they have the company of Allah Ta'ālā all the time and under all conditions is so great a wealth that wealths of the world and beyond, as we do or do not know, are just nothing as compared to that honour.

It was to make these very instructions become their ever-present response, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم delivered the following sermon right there on the site of combat during many a battles of Islām:

"O my people, do not look forward to fight the enemy in a combat. Rather, pray that Allah keeps you in a state of peace and well-being. However, when the inevitable happens and you have to confront them, then, stand firm and be patient and be assured that Paradise lies under the shade of swords."

[Muslim]

Another negative and detrimental aspect of conduct against which

warning has been given in verse 47 and from which abstinence has been advised is that believers should not wax proud over their strength and numbers nor should they be guilty of nursing some personal interest of theirs rather than remaining sincere to their mission at hand, because these two approaches would usually bring down great powers of the world on their knees.

Embedded in this verse, there is an allusion to the circumstances under which the Quraysh of Makkah who had marched off from their city to give military cover to their trade caravan with the heavy backing of men and materials and waxing proud over their number and strength. And even when the trade caravan had passed far beyond the range of any possible attack by Muslims, they elected not to return even then - because, they had other axes to grind by giving a little demonstration of their valour on the site of combat.

According to authentic reports, when Abū Sufyān succeeded in getting past the range of Muslim attack with his trade caravan, he sent a courier to Abū Jahl bearing the message that there was no need for him to go any further and that he should better return. Many other Quraysh chiefs had also concurred with this advice. But, driven by his pride, arrogance and the desire for recognition, Abū Jahl declared on oath that they would not return until they reach the site of Badr and celebrate their victory there for a few days.

The outcome was that he and his well-known accomplices found themselves dumped there for ever. Muslims have been instructed to abstain from the methods adopted by them.

Verses 48 - 49

وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ
النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَّكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئَتَيْنِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقَبَيْهِ
وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِئٌ مِّمَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ
وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي
قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ غَرَّ هَوَاهُ دِينُهُمْ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

And when the Satan beautified their deeds for them

and said, "None of the people is to overpower you to-day, and I am a protector for you." But, when the two groups saw each other, he turned back on his heels and said, "I have nothing to do with you. I am seeing what you do not see. I am scared of Allah, and Allah is severe in punishment." [48]

When the hypocrites and those who have a malady in their hearts said, "The belief of these people has deluded them." And whoever places his trust in Allah, then, Allah is Mighty, Wise. [49]

Commentary

Since its beginning, Sūrah al-Anfāl has been dealing with the actual events and attending circumstances of the battle of Badr along with subsequent lessons learnt and related injunctions given.

One such event from here relates to the Satan who misled the disbelievers of Makkah, exhorted them to go to battle against Muslims and then he disengaged, and left them all by themselves right there in the middle of the battlefield. This event has been mentioned at the beginning of verse 48.

Did this deception of the Satan take the form of scruples put into the hearts of the Quraysh? Or, did the Satan come to them in human form and talked to the Quraysh face to face? Both probabilities exist here. But, the words of the Qur'ān seem to support the second eventuality - that the Satan misled them by appearing in a human form before them.

According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما reported by Imām ibn Jarīr, when the army of the Quraysh of Makkah marched out from the city, they were terribly worried about a possible danger from their neighbouring tribe of Banū Bakr, also an enemy. They apprehended that once they went out to confront Muslims, this tribe hostile to them may find an opportunity to attack their homes and hurt their women and children there. No doubt, they had demonstrated their readiness to respond to the plaintive appeal for help made by Abū Sufyān, the leader of their trade caravan, but they were dragging their feet because of this danger. In this perplexing situation, all of a sudden, the Satan appeared in the form and guise of Surāqah ibn Mālīk holding a flag in his hand and flanked by a regiment of tough fighting men. Surāqah ibn Mālīk was a big chief who

controlled the tribal area from where that danger of attack was expected. He stepped forward and addressed the army of Quraysh youngmen through which he misled them in two ways. First, he said: لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ النَّاسِ (None of the people is to overpower you today - 48). By this, he meant that he had a good idea of the strength of their adversary and he could also see their own physical and numerical superiority, therefore, he assured them that they should stop worrying, march ahead and prevail, for no one is going to prevail against them.

Then, he said: أَنَا بِكُمْ جَارٍ مُقِيمٌ (I am a protector for you - 48). By saying this, he was referring to their apprehensions against the tribe of Banū Bakr who might attack their homes and families in Makkah during their absence. Here, he was taking the responsibility that nothing of this sort was going to happen as he was their supporter and caretaker. The Quraysh of Makkah already knew about Surāqah ibn Mālīk being a known and influential personality of the area. Hearing this assurance from him, they became emotionally stable. They dismissed the threat from the tribe of Banū Bakr from their hearts and became all set to go and confront Muslims.

Thus, by employing this dual deception, the Satan drove these people to their killing field and what he did for himself is described by the Holy Qur'an in the following words: فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْقُبُورَ تَكَصُّ عَلَى عَقَبَتَيْهِ (So, when the two groups [the disbelievers of Makkah and Muslims] saw each other [at Badr], he turned back on his heels - 48).

Since a force of satans had also assembled in support of the disbelievers of Makkah at the battle of Badr, therefore, Allah Ta'ālā sent a force of angels under the command of Jibra'īl and Mikā'īl to meet their challenge. According to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reported by Imām Ibn Jarīr and others, when the Satan who was commanding his force in the human guise of Surāqah ibn Mālīk at that time saw Archangel Jibra'īl and the force of angels with him, he lost his nerves. At that time, he was standing hand in hand with a Qurayshī warrior, Ḥārith ibn Hishām. All of a sudden, he tried to free his hand clasped into the hand of Ḥārith. When Ḥārith asked him as to why he was doing that, he whacked his chest with a blow and threw him down. Now unchecked, he bolted out from the battlefield. Ḥārith - under the impression that he was Surāqah - shouted at him: O Surāqah, chief of Arabia, you had said that you will support us and here

you are doing this to us in the middle of a battle! The Satan - in the guise of Surāqah - replied: **إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ** (I have nothing to do with you. I am seeing what you do not see. I am scared of Allah - 48). Thus, he disengaged himself from the earlier compact because he was seeing a force of angels and parted ways with the disbelievers on the plea that he feared Allah.

When the Satan saw the force of angels, he virtually saw trouble for him as he knew their power. As for his statement that he was scared of Allah, says Tafsīr authority Qatādah, this was a lie forged by him. Had he feared Allah, why would he disobey Him? But, other Commentators have suggested that his fear is justified in its own place because he is fully aware of the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā and that He is severe at punishment. Therefore, there is no reason for not fearing. However, bland fear without faith and obedience is useless.

Abū Jahl, when he noticed signs of weakness showing up in his army because of the withdrawal of Surāqah and his force, he tried to avert the awkward situation by appealing that they should not feel being affected by the sudden retreat of Surāqah for he had a secret understanding with Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to do that. In short, after the retreat of the Satan, what was due to happen to them did. It was on their return to Makkah that one of them met Surāqah ibn Mālīk. This person scolded Surāqah telling him that he was responsible for their defeat in the battale of Badr and certainly for all the losses that followed in its wake because he had broken the backs of their fighting men by retreating from the action on the battlefield. Surāqah said: I never went with you, nor did I ever take part in anything you were doing there. In fact, I heard of your defeat only after you had reached Makkah.

After having reported all these narrations in his Tafsīr, Imām Ibn Kathīr said: It is the customary practice of Satan, the accursed, that he would cause man to become involved with evil and then leave him off in the middle of it. The Qur'an has mentioned this habit of the Satan repeatedly. One such verse says:

**كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ**

It is like the Satan when he tells man: "Disbelieve." Then, af-

ter he becomes a disbeliever, he says: "I have nothing to do with you. I am scared of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds".

(59:16)

The Anatomy of Satanic Deception and Personal Defence

There are some elements of guidance we receive from what has been mentioned in this verse:

(1) That the '*Shaiṭān*' is man's enemy who employs all sorts of tricks, guises and stratagems to bring loss to him. There are occasions when he would simply inject a scruple in the heart and harass his victim and there are times when he would deceive man by appearing before him.

(2) That Allah Ta'ālā has given him the ability to appear before man in various guises. There is a well-known book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence called *آكام المرجان فى أحكام الجان* : '*Ākām al-Marjān fi Āḥkām al-Jānn*' where it has been proved in detail. Therefore, authorities among mystic scholars who are recognized as masters in illumination (*kashf*) and eye-witness (*shuhūd*) have warned people that it is dangerous to start following a person simply by seeing him or hearing him say something without taking the trouble of finding out his antecedents and circumstantial conditions. There could be couched Satanic inputs even in what is known as illumination (*kashf*) and inspiration (*ilhām*). So, the ideal method of remaining safe against satanic deceptions is to follow Divine Revelation faithfully.

Success Comes By Actually Being on the Straight Path and Not By Simply Having Sincere Intentions

(3) That the most frequent reason why people get involved in disbelief, polytheism or other impermissible doings is no other but that the Satan, by making their evil deeds appear handsome, desirable and beneficial, turns their hearts away from truth, as it is, and its consequences, as they would be. Once so brain-washed, they would start taking their false as the epitome of truth and their loss as the ultimate gain, so much so that, very much like the votaries of truth, they would be all set to lay down even their lives for the sake of their false notions. It was for this reason that the army and the chiefs of Quraysh, when they were departing from the Baytullah, had already supplicated before it by saying: اللهم انصر اهدى الطائفتين (O Allah, help the better-guided group between the two of us) (See pages 183-184). Such was the

level of their unawareness that they simply walked into the snare of the Satan and started taking themselves to be the ones better-guided and truth-oriented and, unbelievably enough, they would go to the outer limits of sacrificing their lives and possessions in support of their false stand - and that too with all 'sincerity' at their command!

From here we find out that bland sincerity is never sufficient unless the direction of deeds is correct.

In the verse which follows (49), mentioned there is a common saying of the hypocrites of Madīnah and the polytheists of Makkah. It was almost in a strain of combined sympathy and contempt that it was said about Muslims: غُرِّمُوا لَهُمْ (The belief of these people has deluded them). It means that those handful of Muslims had come all the way to the battlefield of Badr to challenge an army so powerful and well-equipped as if those poor people have been deluded by their faith which seems to have thrown them into the jaws of death. Responding to them, Allah Ta'ālā said: وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (And whoever places his trust in Allah, then, Allah is Mighty, Wise). The sense of the statement is that one who places his total trust in Allah never runs into disgrace because Allah is all-dominating and when it comes to wisdom, there is no plan or intelligence or insight into the future which can hold before it. In other words, those who know no more than what is material would only place their trust in nothing but the material. How would they know the secret power which lies in the treasures of the One who has created everything material. This power accompanies those who believe in Allah Ta'ālā and place their total trust in Him.

Even in our day, there are those religiously-observing and innocent-looking Muslims who would become ready targets for those who claim to have advanced rationally and intellectually and who would benignly dismiss them as old-timers who might as well be left alone. But, should such people be armed with perfect faith and trust in Allah, no harm can touch them - even if intended and tried.

Verses 50 - 53

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ يَتَوَقَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَصْرِعُونَ وَجُوهُهُمْ
وَأَذْبَارُهُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُ

أَيَّدِيكُمْ وَآَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذَّابِ إِلٍ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ
مُعْظِرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

And only if you were to see (them) when the angels take out the souls of those who disbelieve, beating their faces and their backs, and (saying) "Taste the punishment of the flaming Fire. [50] That is due to what your hands sent ahead, and that Allah is not cruel to the slaves." [51]

(Their way is) like the way of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them. They disbelieved the signs of Allah. So Allah seized them for their sins. Surely, Allah is strong, severe in punishment. [52]

All this because Allah is not to change a favour He has conferred on a people unless they change their own selves, and that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [53]

Commentary

Mentioned in the first two of the verses cited above is the punishment of disbelievers at the time of their death and the warnings given to them by the angels. Here, addressing the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, it has been said that had he seen the condition of the disbelievers at that time when the angels of Allah were beating their faces and backs as they extracted their souls and telling them to have a taste of the punishment of burning in the Fire, then, he would have seen something awesome.

Some of the leading Commentators have declared this statement to be about the particular disbelievers from among the Quraysh who had come out to confront Muslims at the site of Badr where Allah Ta'ālā had sent an army of angels to help Muslims. Thus, the meaning comes to be that the Quraysh chiefs who were killed in the battle of Badr were killed at the hands of the angels who were hitting them from the front on their faces and from the rear on their backs and were killing them in this manner while giving them the dark tidings of the punish-

ment of Hell in the Hereafter.

Then, there are other Commentators who have kept the sense of this verse general in view of the generality of the words used in it. According to them, the verse means: When a disbeliever dies, the angel of death beats his face and back while taking out his soul. In some narrations, it appears that they have lashes of fire and maces of iron in their hands which they use to strike at the disbeliever condemned to death. But, as this punishment is not related to this world of elements, rather, is related to the universe of the grave which is known as *Barzakh* (the post-death---pre-ressurrection state), therefore, this punishment is not generally seen optically.

Therefore, the modality used to address the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was: 'And only if you were to see,' you would have seen a scene full of sobering lessons. This tells us that, after death, punishment is given to disbelievers while they are in the state of *Barzakh*, but that phenomenon is related to the universe of the Unseen (*‘alam al-ghayb*), therefore, it is not seen usually. The punishment of the grave finds mention in several other verses of the Holy Qur'an as well, while Ḥadīth narrations on this subject just abound.

Addressing the disbelievers in the second verse (51), it was said that the punishment of this world and that of the Hereafter was nothing but what they had earned with their own hands. Since things done usually take their shape through the work of hands, therefore, mention was made of hands. The sense is that the punishment coming to them was a direct outcome of their own deeds. And as for Allah Ta'ālā, He was not the kind of authority who would bring injustice upon His servants and go about subjecting someone to punishment just for no reason.

The third verse (52) tells us that the punishment of Allah visiting these criminals is not something totally unprecedented. In fact, it is nothing but the customary practice of Allah that He would give reason and understanding to His servants so that they could act as guided. Then, all around them, they have countless things they can think about and go on to know Allah Ta'ālā and recognize His great power, and then do not stoop to the level of taking the weak ones from among His creation as His partners, associates or equals and, after that, He sends His Books and Messengers for additional warning. When the

Messengers of Allah come, they leave no stone unturned in making people understand the message. They even go to the outer limits of demonstrating the manifestations of the inalienable subdueing power of Allah Ta'ālā in the form of miracles. Now, if a person or a people were to close their eyes to all these things, give no ear to any of these Divine warnings, then, for such people, there is the inevitable practice of Allah Ta'ālā: That they are visited by punishment in this world too, and that they are subjected to the everlasting punishment of the Hereafter as well. It was said: كَذَابٌ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ (Their way is) like the way of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them - 52.' The Arabic word: دَاب (da'b) used in the text means habit or way. Thus, the sense is that the world already knows the customary practice of Allah Ta'ālā vis-a-vis the haughty and the contumacious like Pharaoh and his people and has seen its manifestation when Pharaoh was made to drown in the sea with all his power and people, and similar was the fate of those before him, the people of 'Ād and Thamūd, who were hit by many kinds of punishment which eliminated them totally. Then, it was said: كَفَرُوا (52) which means when these people belied the verses and signs of Allah Ta'ālā, He seized them with His punishment because of their sins. After that, the verse ends with the statement: إِنَّ اللَّهَ (52) which gives the reason why it happened the way it did - that Allah Ta'ālā is Strong. No one claiming any kind of strength and valour can, on that basis alone, get away from His punishment. And then, certainly very severe is the punishment which comes from Allah Ta'ālā Himself.

Stated in the fourth verse (53) there is a standing rule which spells out the condition under which Allah Ta'ālā allows a people to continue enjoying blessings bestowed by Him. It was said: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مَغْفِرًا لِّعَمَلٍ طَرَفًا (because Allah is not to change a favour He has conferred on a people unless they change their own selves - 53).

The first thing worth pondering about at this place is that Allah Ta'ālā has not set forth any rule as to the bestowal of blessing and favour, nor has He put any restriction and condition for it, nor has He made it to be dependent on some good deed - because, had this been so, then, the foremost favour bestowed on us is our very existence. Placed in this marvelous menagerie of the power of Allah are thousands and thousands of additional blessings which, it is all too obvious, were conferred on us at a time when we did not exist nor any of our deed did.

If blessings and favours from Allah Ta'ālā were to wait for good deeds from His servants, our being itself would have not materialized.

The blessing and the mercy of Allah Ta'ālā is there all by itself as an outcome of His being the Lord of all the worlds and the One who is All-Merciful and Very-Merciful. However, what has been described in this verse is a rule which governs the continuity of this favour and mercy. According to this rule, when Allah Ta'ālā favours a people with His blessing, He does not take it back until such time that the people themselves bring about changes in their conditions of living and ways of doing things and thus become the very agency which invites the punishment of Allah.

The change of conditions referred to here means a shift or change from good deeds to bad deeds and from good states of being to bad states of being, or that a person who, at the time of the coming of blessings, was involved in certain sins and evils, then, once he had received those blessings, he stoops lower and gets involved in deeds far more evil.

It becomes evident from the details given above that peoples mentioned in previous verses, that is, the Quraysh disbelievers and the people of Pharaoh, have their relevance to the present verse on the grounds that these people were not all that good in their states of living even at the time the blessings came. They were still the polytheists and disbelievers they were. But, after having been blessed with favours, these people became far more dauntless in their evil deeds and acts of wickedness.

The people of Pharaoh started inflicting all sorts of injustices against the Banī Isrā'il. Then they rose in hostility against Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام which was a grave addition to their past crimes. Through these doings, they brought changes in their living conditions which led them to more evils and when this happened, Allah Ta'ālā too brought a change in His blessing by changing it into retribution and punishment. Similarly, the Quraysh of Makkah were though involved in polytheism and other evil practices, yet they did have a few good deeds to their credit, such as, regard for kinship, hospitality, service of Hajj pilgrims, respect for Baytullah etc. Allah Ta'ālā showered on them many material and spiritual blessings. On the material plane, great impetus was given to their trading activities. In a country where no trading

caravan belonging to anyone could pass through safely, their trade caravans would go to Syria in the north and Yemen in the south and return in safety and with success - something mentioned by the Qur'ān in Sūrah al-Quraysh (106) under: رَحْلَةُ الشَّيْءِ وَالضَّبَبِ (they used to make alternate trading visits in winter and summer -106:2).

Then, on the spiritual plane in terms of their religion, they were blessed with a favour so great as was never conferred upon any of the past peoples - that the foremost among prophets, the last of the line, *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was destined to rise among them, and Qur'ān, the last, the comprehensive Book of Allah Ta'ālā was sent to them through him.

But, these people, rather than correct themselves through gratitude and appreciation for these blessings of Allah Ta'ālā, went on to make a mess of their moral condition, making it far worse than it already was. They stopped treating their near relations well and started inflicting savage injustices against their own brothers and nephews who chose to embrace Islām. Rather than keep to their tradition of hospitality, pledges were written and promulgated that a total boycott of such Muslims be made, even to the limit of holding back the supply of food and water to them. Instead of providing essential services for Ḥajj pilgrims which they once considered to be their duty, they started preventing Muslims from entering the Ḥaram. These were the standing conditions on the ground which brought about a change in the disbelievers of Quraysh - as a result of which came the counter-change from Allah Ta'ālā. He transformed His favours and blessings into retribution and punishment, thus making them have a taste of disgrace in the mortal world too, and then, it was through the noble person sent as mercy for all the worlds that they invited their own destruction.

As based on trustworthy books of history, it has been said in Tafsīr Maḥzarī that Kilāb ibn Murrah, who is the grandfather of the third grandfather of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم geneologically, was a staunch adherent of the faith of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl عليهما السلام right from the beginning, and he retained the role of leadership in this faith, generations after generation. It was during the period of Quṣayy ibn Kilāb that idol-worship started as a practice among people. Before him, Ka'b ibn Lu'aiyy was their religious leader. He used to deliver a sermon before everyone on the day of Jumu'ah which was called

‘Arūbah in their dialect and tell his audience that the last among prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم would rise from among their progeny. Everyone will be bound to follow him. Whoever fails to have faith in him, no deed of his shall be acceptable with Allah. Well-known are his poetic compositions about the coming of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as part of pagan poetry. Then, Qusayy ibn Kilāb used to make arrangements of food and water for all Hajj pilgrims, so much so, that these things continued to be within the family of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم until his blessed period. Given this historical perspective, it could also be said that the change which affected the mass behaviour of the Quraysh may as well mean that they had forsaken the faith of Sayyid-nā Ibrāhim عليه السلام and taken to idol-worship.

However, a return to the subject of the verse tells us that there are occasions when Allah Ta‘ālā would bestow His favour also on people who do not seem to be deserving of it in view of their deeds. But, should they start, after having received that favour, committing excesses and indulging in evil deeds more frequently, rather than turn the direction of their deeds towards correction and betterment, then, this favour is taken away from them and they become deserving of Divine punishment.

At the end of the verse, it was said: **وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ** (and that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing - 53). It means that Allah Ta‘ālā is the one who hears everything they say and knows everything they do, therefore, there is no probability of some error or misunderstanding in the decision He finally takes.

Verses 54 - 58

كَذَابٍ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ
فَآهَلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۖ وَكُلٌّ كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ
﴿٥٤﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
﴿٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ
وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَمَا تَتَّقُهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرَّدَ بِهِمْ مَنْ
خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَدَّكُرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً

فَانْذِرْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

(It is) like what did the people of Pharaoh and those before them. They belied the signs of their Lord. So, We destroyed them for their sins and drowned the people of Pharaoh, and they all were unjust. [54]

Surely, the worst of all the living, in the sight of Allah, are those who reject Faith, so they do not believe [55] - those from whom you have taken a pledge, then they break their pledge each time, and they do not fear Allah. [56]

So, if you find them in war, make them an example (deterrent) for those behind them, so that they take a lesson. [57] And if you apprehend a breach from a people, then, throw (the treaty) towards them being right forward. Surely, Allah does not like those who breach trust. [58]

Commentary

The words used in the first of the verses cited above are almost the same as have appeared a verse earlier in: كَذَّابٌ إِلَهُ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ (Their way is) like the way of the people of Pharaoh and of those before them - 52.' But, the purpose behind these two statements differs in both. The purpose in the first verse (52) was to state that the disbelief of those people became the cause of their punishment while, in the present verse (54), the purpose is to state that, according to the common law of Allah Ta'ālā - when the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā descend upon a people and they fail to recognize their worth and value and refuse to bow down before Him - then, His blessings are transformed into misfortunes and punishments. When the people of Pharaoh and the peoples before them failed to appreciate the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā as due, blessings were taken away from them and they were seized by punishment instead. Apart from this difference in purpose, changes have also been introduced in words used at some places which serve to release particular hints in the text. For example, in the first verse (52), the words used were: كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ (They disbelieved the signs of Allah) while here, the words used are: بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ (... the signs of their Lord - 54). Thus, by mentioning the attribute: رَبِّ (Rabb: Lord) instead of the name, 'Allah,' hint was given that these people were terribly unjust and insensate against truth, people who would just go

ahead and start belying the signs of the very Being who was their *Rabb* (sustainer, nourisher, cherisher) under whose blessings they all, from their dawn of existence to their present condition, have been brought up.

In addition to that, in the first verse (52), said there was: **فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ** (so, Allah seized them for their sins) while what has been said here is: **فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ** (so, We destroyed them for their sins - 54). This explains the brevity in the first statement because, in the first verse, mentioned there was their being seized in punishment which could take different forms. May be, they are overtaken by misfortunes within their lifetime on this earth, or that their very existence is eliminated outright. In the present verse (54), by saying: **أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ** (We destroyed them), it was made clear that the punishment all those peoples deserved was the punishment of death, therefore, they were destroyed. The destruction of every set of such people took different forms. Since the Pharaoh from among them claimed godhood and his people attested to his claim, therefore, he was mentioned particularly: **وَأَغْرَقْنَاهُ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ** (and drowned the people of Pharaoh - 54). As for the forms in which destruction came upon other peoples, it has not been described here. However, details pertaining to these too have appeared in other verses where it has been said that some of them were overrun by an earthquake, some others were made to sink into the earth, or transformed into animals, or seized by wind storms - and finally, came the punishment for the disbelievers of Makkah at the hands of Muslims in the battle of Badr.

In the verse which follows immediately, it was said about the same disbelievers: **إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا** (Surely, the worst of all the living, in the sight of Allah, are those who reject Faith - 55). Here, the word: **دَوَابِّ** (*dawābb*) is the plural form of *dābbah* which literally means creatures who walk on the earth. Therefore, this word covers human beings and whatever of the animals walk on the earth. But, in common usage, this word is used particularly for quadruped animals. Since they were far below animals in their state of insensitiveness, they were identified with that expression in the language. Thus, the meaning of the verse is clear - that these people were the worst of animals from among all animals and human beings. At the end of the verse, it was said: **فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ** (so they do not believe - 55). The sense is that these

people have allowed their God-given abilities to go waste by making the satisfaction of their physical needs the very purpose of their life, therefore, having access to the refinements of Faith was just not possible for them.

Sa'īd ibn Jubayr said that this verse was revealed about six men from the Jews about whom Allah Ta'ālā has declared in advance that they will never enter the fold of Faith.

In addition to that, through this word, the aim is to grant an exemption from punishment for people who were though engaged at that time, in tandem with disbelievers, in their struggle against Muslims and Islām but the likelihood was that, in future, a time will come when they will repent their past mistakes and embrace Islām. The fact is that this is how it came to be. A very large group from among them became, by embracing Islām, not only personally pious and righteous, but rose to be - in word and deed alike - leaders among men and women of the world as heralds of moral betterment and paradigms of responsible conduct of life before the Creator.

The third verse (56):

الَّذِينَ عٰهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِى كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ

(those from whom you have taken a pledge, then they break their pledge each time, and they do not fear Allah)

is about the Jews of Madīnah and those of Banū Qurayzah and Banū Naḍīr. Mentioned in the previous verses was the descent of Divine punishment on the disbelievers of Makkah in the battle of Badr at the hands of Muslims, as well as their resemblance with disbelievers of past communities. In this verse, mention has been made of the particular group of unjust people who became like serpents in the sleeves of Muslims soon after their migration to Madīnah. On the one hand, they claimed to be at peace with Muslims while, on the other, they used to conspire with the disbelievers of Makkah against Muslims. These people were Jews by religion and the way Abū Jahl was the top leader of the disbelievers of Makkah against Islām, similarly, the top anti-Islām leader of the Jews of Madīnah was called Ka'b ibn Ashraf.

When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم graced the blessed city of Madīnah after Hijrah, they saw the rise of Muslim power, were impressed, even somewhat overawed by it, but the fire of their anti-

Muslim feelings kept burning in their hearts all the time.

Islāmic political wisdom demanded that, as far as possible, the Jews of Madīnah should be engaged to go along with Muslims under some sort of bilateral treaty, so that they would not come to the assistance of Makkan disbelievers. Because of their awe of Muslims, the Jews too wished to have this very arrangement.

Towards Islāmic Nationality: The First Step

After reaching Madīnah, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم laid the initial foundation of political theory in Islām. The first step he took was to eliminate prejudices of country and tribe from the Muhājirīn (Emigrants: those who had migrated from Makkah) and Anṣār (Residents of Madīnah who helped the Muhājirīn). In its place, he established a new nationality in the name of Islām. This turned different tribes from the Muhājirīn and Anṣār into brothers to each other. Then, it was through him that Allah Ta'ālā helped remove mutual differences among Anṣārs themselves which had been continuing for centuries. Thus, not only did the Anṣārs enter a new era of brotherhood among themselves, they became brothers to the Muhājirīn as well.

Treaty with Jews: The Second Step

The background in which the second political step was taken was marked by two adversaries of Muslims. The first were the disbelievers of Makkah whose tortures had compelled them to leave Makkah. The second were the Jews of Madīnah who had then become the neighbours of Muslims.

Out of these two, a treaty was concluded with the Jews and was duly documented in details. The compliance of this treaty was made incumbent on all Jews living in and around Madīnah as well as on all Muhājirīn and Anṣār. The full text of this treaty can be seen in البداية والنهاية: Al-Bidāyah wa an-Nihāyah of Ibn Kathīr and Sīrah of Ibn Hishām and elsewhere. The most significant article of this treaty was that, in the event of a mutual difference, the decision of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم shall be binding for all. There was another article there which stipulated that the Jews of Madīnah shall not provide any assistance to any enemy against Muslims, either overtly or covertly. But, at the time of the battle of Badr, these people committed a breach of trust and supported the disbelievers of Makkah by supplying weapons and other war materials to them. However, when the outcome of

the battle of Badr appeared in the form of a clear victory for Muslims and a disgraceful defeat for the disbelievers, they felt cowed down once again. They presented themselves before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and apologized for the mistake they had committed at that time and sought his forgiveness for it on the promise that they would commit no breach of trust in the future.

Because Islāmic forbearance and generosity was his way, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم accepted to renew the treaty once again. But, these people were captives of their peculiar instinctive reflexes. When they heard about the initial defeat and loss of Muslims in the battle of Uhud, their ambitions went high. Their chief, Ka'b ibn Ashraf, himself travelled to Makkah and exhorted the disbelievers of Makkah to mount another attack on Muslims with fresh and full preparation in which the Jews of Madīnah will be with them.

This was the second breach of trust they committed against Islām. In the present verse, by mentioning this repeated breach of trust, brought into focus is the wickedness of these people, for they were the people who themselves made a treaty with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, yet they were the ones who, each time, kept breaking their pledge to abide by the treaty. At the end of the verse, it was said: **وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ** (and they do not fear Allah - 56). This could also mean that, since these ill-fated people are drunk with worldly greed having no concern for the life to come, therefore, they do not fear the punishment of the Hereafter. Then, it could also mean that such characterless people who break pledges do meet their evil end in this world, yet these are the kind of people who, because of their negligence and ignorance, do not fear it.

Then, came the time when the whole world saw that these people tasted the punishment for the evil role they played. Like Abū Jahl, the chief of the disbelievers, Ka'b ibn Ashraf, the chief of the Jews, was killed and the rest of the Jews of Madīnah were expelled from the city.

In the fourth verse (57), Allah Ta'ālā has given a standing instruction to His *Rasūl* صلى الله عليه وسلم about such evil breakers of solemn pledges in the following words:

فَإِذَا تَشَفَعْتَهُمْ فِي الْحَرْبِ فَشَرِّدْ بِهِمْ مَّنْ خَلْفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

So, if you find them in war, make them an example (deterrent) for those behind them, so that they take a lesson.

Here, the word: تَفَنَّنَهُمْ (*tathqafannahum*) means to get the upper hand against them and the word: شَرَّدَ (*sharrada*) is a derivation from the infinitive noun: تَشْرِيدَ (*tashrīd*) which essentially means to drive out or scatter away. So, the verse means: 'If you overpower such people in a war, give them a drastic punishment which becomes an instant lesson for others - so that those who are busy bashing Islām behind the cover of such people serving as their agent provocateurs should understand clearly that there remains no alternative for them but to run for their lives. The drive of the instruction is that these people should be punished in a manner which makes an impression on the disbelievers of Makkah and other hostile tribes and sucks away any courage they may have to come back and confront Muslims in the future.

By saying: كَلَّهْمْ يَذْكُرُونَ (so that they take a lesson - 57) at the end of the verse, a hint has been given towards the universal mercy of the Lord of all the worlds. This treatment makes it clear that the real purpose of this exemplary punishment was not to take revenge or release personal anger, in fact, this was being awarded in their own interest and expedient gain whereby they may, perhaps, review conditions before them, regain some of their sanity, feel ashamed of what they did and go on to correct themselves.

The Option to Cancel a Peace Treaty

In the fifth verse (58), the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been told about an important article which forms part of the law of war and peace. Here, after placing due stress on the importance of complying with the terms of a treaty, an alternative has also been laid out to cover a situation in which there may arise a danger of breach of trust from the other party to the treaty any time during its legal tenure. Given this situation, it remains no more necessary that Muslims should continue to abide by their allegiance to the treaty. But, also not permissible for Muslims is the taking of any initiative (pre-emptive action of any kind) against the other party - before the treaty has been clearly terminated. In fact, the correct approach is to pick up a peaceful and convenient occasion and let them know that their ill intentions or treaty contraventions are no secrets to them, or their dealings appear to be dubious, for which reason, Muslims shall not consider themselves bound by the treaty. Consequently, they too were free to take any action they wished to take. The words of the verse are:

وَأَمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِنْ قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانْبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ

And if you apprehend a breach from a people, then, throw (the treaty) towards them being right forward. Surely, Allah does not like those who breach trust - 58.

The sense of the verse is that taking any military initiative against a people with whom a peace treaty has been signed is included under breach of trust and Allah Ta'ālā does not like those who are guilty of *Khiyānah*, that is, those who commit breach of trust - even if this *Khiyānah* were to cause loss to hostile disbelievers, something also impermissible. However, should there be the danger of a breach of trust from the other party, it is possible to go ahead and openly proclaim before them that Muslims shall not remain bound by the treaty in future. But, this proclamation has to be in a manner which makes Muslims and the other party like-wise, on the same footing. It means that nothing should be done to create a situation in which preparations are made to confront the other party in advance of this proclamation and warning while they are caught unawares and remain unable to make counter preparations for their defence. In short, the message given is: Make whatever preparations have to be made, but do it only after the proclamation and warning.

This, then, is the justice of Islām - that the rights of its enemies who commit breach of trust are also guarded and that restrictions are placed on Muslims - not on their adversaries - that they should not make any aggressive preparations against them before having declared that they have nothing to do with the treaty anymore. (Mazharī and others)

Fulfillment of Trust Obligations: A Significant Episode

Based on a narration of Salīm ibn 'Āmir, it has been reported by Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Al-Nasā'ī and Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal that Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah رضى الله عنه had a no-war pact with a group of people for a specified period of time. It occurred to Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah that he should move his army and equipment close to those people so that his forces could pounce on the enemy immediately on the expiry of the period of their peace pact. But, exactly at the time when the army of Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah was getting ready to march ahead in the desired direction, it was noticed that an aged person riding on a horse was shouting a slogan very loudly. He was saying: اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَنَا لَا غَدْرًا

(*Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar* - Allah is Great, Allah is Great - we should fulfill the pledge, we should not contravene it). He was saying that with the famous cry of *Allāhu Akbar* (which increased the religious gravity of the matter). The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said: When a cease-fire agreement or a peace pact with a people comes into effect, it is necessary that no knot be opened or tied against their provisions. Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah رضى الله عنه was informed about it. When he saw the herald of the saying, he recognized him. He was Sayyidnā 'Amr ibn 'Anbasah, a Ṣahābī. Sayyidnā Mu'āwiyah lost no time and ordered his army to march back so that he does not become one of those who had committed a breach of trust by initiating war action while being within the time frame of a no-war pact. (Ibn Kathīr)

Verses 59 - 62

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ
بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْعَلْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ
يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

And the disbelievers should never think that they have surpassed. Surely, they will not frustrate (the Divine will). [59]

And make ready against them whatever you can of the power and of the trained horses whereby you frighten the enemy of Allah and your own enemy and others besides them whom you do not know. Allah knows them. And whatever thing you spend in the way of Allah, it will be paid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged. [60]

And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it, and place your trust in Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing,

the All-Knowing. [61]

And if they intend to deceive you, then, Allah is all-sufficient for you. He is the One who supported you with His help and with the believers ... [62]

Commentary

Mentioned in the first of the four verses cited above are disbelievers who had not participated in the battle of Badr, therefore, they survived or there were those of them who deserted the battlefield after showing up as participants and were thus able to save their lives. It is about these people that it was said in this verse that these people should not think that they have made their escape good because the battle of Badr was Divine punishment for disbelievers and escaping from its grip was not possible for anyone. Therefore, it was said: **إِنَّهُمْ لَا يَجْعِلُونَ** : 'Surely, they will not frustrate [the Divine will] - 59'. It means that these people cannot outsmart the will and power of Allah by their cleverness. If He decides to seize them, they would be unable to move even one step. May be, they are seized right here in this mortal world, otherwise, their detention in the Hereafter is all too obvious.

This verse has given a clear indication that a sinner who finds himself delivered from some hardship or pain, yet he fails to repent and make amends, rather stands adamant and obstinate over his sin, then, one should never take this to be a sign of success and everlasting deliverance. In fact, such a person is in the grip of Allah Ta'ālā all the time and this respite given to him is actually adding on to his punishment and distress - though, he may not realize it as such.

Production and Supply of Military Hardware for Jihād is a Religious Obligation

Given in the second verse (60), there are injunctions relating to preparations for the defence of Islām against disbelievers. It was said: **وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ** (And make ready against them whatever you can - 60). Here, by placing the restriction of: **مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ** (whatever you can) with the need to produce and supply war materials, the hint given is that it is not necessary for your success that you go about acquiring the same quantity and quality of military equipment as is available to your adversary. Instead of that, it is quite sufficient that you put together whatever supplies you can possibly acquire. If so, the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā shall be with you.

After that, some details about the direction of these preparations were stated tersely. It was said: مِنْ قُوَّةٍ (*min quwwah* : of power). It means: Collect and keep ready the power to fight. Included here is everything in the form of military equipment, weapons, means of transportation and other relevant support - and also learning to stay physically fit and training in fighting skills and strategy. The Qur'ān, however, does not mention the weapons commonly used during those days at this place. Instead, by using the general word, '*quwwah*' or power, it has pointed out in the direction that this power could be different in terms of every age, country or area. The weapons of those days were arrows, swords and spears. Then came the age of guns and cannons and now is the time of bombs and rockets (and what not). The word: '*Quwwah*' or power used here covers everything. Therefore, Muslims of today should acquire nuclear capability as far as they can - and tanks and fighter planes and submarines - because all these are included within the sense of this very '*Quwwah*' or power. It should also be borne in mind that should we need to learn any art or science to achieve this end and if such effort be made with the intention that it will be employed to defend Islām and Muslims and to meet any aggressive challenges from the disbelievers - then, that too will fall under the procedure of Jihād and will carry reward.

After having mentioned the word: '*Quwwah*' (power) in a general sense, also mentioned there was a particular form of power in clear terms by saying: مِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ (and of the trained horses). The word: رِبَاط (*Ribāṭ*) is used in its sense as a verbal noun as well as in the sense of: مَرْبُوط (*marbūṭ*). Taken in the first sense, it would mean to tie horses and in the second, tied horses. The outcome of both is the same, that is, to breed, break and train horses and hold them tied in readiness with the intention of using them in Jihād, or to assemble together a collection of such trained horses. Out of the supplies needed in a war, horses were mentioned particularly for the reason that those were times when the most effective mode of winning a war against countries and peoples of that period was no other but horses. Even today, there are inaccessible areas which cannot be overtaken without horses. Therefore, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Allah Ta'ālā has placed *barakah* on the forehead of horses.

There are other sound Aḥādīth in which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم

ﷺ has declared the efforts to procure and assemble war materials and the learning of the ability to use them efficiently to be a great act of *'Ibādah* deserving supreme rewards from Allah. Similarly, equally great returns have been promised for making and shooting arrows.

And since the real purpose of Jihād is to protect and defend Islām and Muslims - and defence as conceived in every period of time and by every set of people remains different - therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: جَاهِدُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ (Carry out Jihād against the Mushriks with your belongings, and your own selves and your eloquence (of speech or writing). (Hadīth reported by Abū Dāwūd and An-Nasā'ī and Ad-Dārimī from Sayyidnā Anas رضى الله عنه)

This Hadīth tells us that the way Jihād - defensive or initiated - is waged with weapons, it is also carried out at times with the power of speech, and the Jihād carried out with the power of pen or writing is governed by the same injunction which governs speech. When Islām and Qur'an are defended through the medium of speech or writing against attacks from the forces of disbelief and atheism, or from agents of disinformation, distortion and interpolation, that too is included in Jihād as based on this clear and definitive textual authority of the Qur'an (Naṣṣ).

After having given the command to make war materials ready for use, also described there was the wisdom of assembling these materials together - and its real purpose - in the following words: تَرْهَبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ (whereby you frighten the enemy of Allah and your own enemy - 60). It means that the real purpose of acquiring and storing military hardware, whether for initiated action or defence, is not to indulge in an exercise of killing and being killed. The purpose, in fact, is to bring down the force of Kufr and Shirk and fill the hearts of their protagonists with awe so that they stay suppressed. On occasions, that can be done by the power of the spoken or the written word only. Then, there are other occasions when fighting and killing become necessary. So, defence is obligatory (*farḍ*) as dictated by the prevailing condition.

Then it was said that Muslims do know some of those people who are to be impressed with preparations and readiness for combat - and these are people engaged in an ongoing confrontation with Muslims, that is, the disbelievers of Makkah and the Jews of Madīnah. Then, there were other people too, those whom the Muslims did not know

yet. The reference here is to the disbelievers and polytheists of the whole world who had not come up against Muslims, yet in future, they too were to clash against them. This verse of the Holy Qur'ān has told Muslims clearly that, in case they do make full preparations to fight against their present adversary, it will not only cow them down but will also cast its shadows over disbelievers living in distant lands, as it did happen in the case of Cyrus and Ceaser and others of those days. They all were deterred and suppressed during the age of the rightly-guided *Khulafā'* of Islām.

It goes without saying that the process of putting war materials together and fighting a war has to be backed financially and when it comes to actual production or procurement of military support, that too can be made available through investment of money. Therefore, at the end of the verse, the great merit and reward of spending wealth in the way of Allah has been described by saying that 'the return for whatever you spend in the way of Allah shall be given to you in full.' There are times when this return is received in the form of war spoils right here in this mortal world as well, otherwise, the return to be received in the Hereafter stands already determined - and, as obvious, that is more praiseworthy.

The third verse (61) takes up injunctions of peace and aspects related to it. It was said: وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْعَلْ لَهَا (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it). The word: سَلَم (salm) with *fatḥa* on *sīn*, or: سِلْم (silm) with *kasrah* on *sīn* are both used in the sense of peace. The meaning of the verse - as fairly evident from the translation - is that should the disbelievers incline towards peace on some occasion, you too should incline towards it. At this point, it should be borne in mind that the imperative form has been used here to carry the sense of choice. Thus, the intended sense is that at a time when disbelievers are inclined towards peace, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also has the choice of making peace, if he feels peace is in the best interest of Muslims.

And the restriction of: إِنْ جَنَحُوا (if they tilt) tells us that peace can be made only when the desire to have peace comes from the disbelievers - because, should Muslims themselves start proposing peace without their desire to have it, then, this would be taken as a sign of their weakness.

However, should there arise a situation in which Muslims are to-

tally encircled and find no way out except a peace for security deal, then, initiating a peace proposal is also permissible as ruled by Muslim jurists and as proved through hints given in the directives of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah (*nuṣūṣ*).

And since the proposal of peace initiated by the enemy does have the probability that they might use it as a strategy of deceit, make them negligent and then make a surprise attack, therefore, at the end of the verse, the instruction given to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was: *وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ* (and place your trust in Allah. Surely, He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing - 61). It means that Allah Ta'ālā hears what they say and also knows the intentions and designs concealed in their hearts. He is sufficient to help you, therefore, do not base your decisions to do things on such probabilities which cannot be proved. The safest policy was to entrust all such apprehensions and scruples with Allah.

After that, in the fourth verse (62), the same subject has been taken up with added clarity where it was said:

وَأِنْ يُرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And if they intend to deceive you, then, Allah is all-sufficient for you. He is the One who supported you with His help and with the believers.

It means that should this very probability turn out to be the reality on the ground - that their intention is bad and they stop at nothing short of a deceptive strike against you - even then, you do not have to bother about it because Allah is sufficient as your supporter. This has been true earlier too. Things have worked for the Holy Prophet ﷺ with nothing but the help and support of Allah Ta'ālā. He was always there behind him, a fact which is the very basis of his victory and success. Then, it was for everyone to witness that He made a group of Muslims rise around him who became his helping hands in the mission. All these arrangements were the outward causes of the phenomena. The thing to believe is that the real and absolute Master who fused together all causes of victory and success in a visible form shall never leave him alone to be deceived by the enemy even today. It was under this Divine promise when, after the revelation of this verse, it never happened throughout the entire span of his life that any deceit or ambush from his enemies brought any harm to him. Therefore, the scholars of

Tafsīr have said that this promise for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is very much like the promise made in: وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِيكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ (and Allah shall keep you protected from the people - 5:67) when, after the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had asked his noble Companions who guarded him against any such dangers that they should now feel relieved and forget about their security concerns regarding his person. This tells us that this promise was special to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. (Bayān al-Qur'ān) As for others, they should do things in terms of formal arrangements after assessing prevailing conditions.

Verses 63 - 66

وَأَلَفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ ۖ لَوْ أَنفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَّا أَلَفْتَ
بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَفَ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ خَرِّصِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ ۖ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ
عِشْرُونَ صَبَرُوا يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا
أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ أَلَنْ حَقَّفَ
اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا ۚ فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ
صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفِينَ
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

... and united their hearts. Had you spent all that is on earth, you would have not united their hearts. But Allah did unite their hearts. Surely, He is Mighty, Wise.

[63]

O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for you, and the believers who followed you. [64]

O Prophet, rouse the believers to fight. If there are twenty among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are one hundred among you, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, for they are a people who do not understand. [65]

And Allah has made it easy on you and He knew that there is weakness in you. So, if there are one hundred

among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are one thousand among you, they will overcome two thousand by the will of Allah. And Allah is with the patient. [66]

Commentary

The first (63) of the four verses from Sūrah Al-Anfāl cited above describes the cause of Muslim victory and the method through which it was achieved. In the verse appearing previous to it (62), the address was to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم where he was told that it was but Allah who had helped him in His own special way, and through the community of Muslims with him. This verse is telling us that help from the community of Muslims can only be made available when this community is mutually in agreement with each other and united as one. Thus, the power and weight it carries emerges to the measure of cohesion and unity it has. If relationship based on mutual unity is strong, the whole community is strong and if this mesh of relationships is loose, the whole community turns incoherent and weak. In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has mentioned his particular blessing which was bestowed on common Muslims for their help and support to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم whereby their hearts were filled with perfect unity and love. Though, before the migration of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to Madīnah, deadly wars had been fought between two of their tribes, Aws and Khazraj. As for mutual disputes, they were a regular feature of their lives. But, it was the *barakah* of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that Allah Ta'ālā made sworn enemies loving brothers to each other. So, the real cause of the establishment and survival of the new Islāmic state at Madīnah and that of its dominance over enemies was nothing but the help and support given by Allah Ta'ālā - and the apparent cause was the mutual love and unity among Muslims.

Alongwith it, also made clear in this verse is the fact that uniting the hearts of different people and infusing them with love and concern for each other is something beyond human control. This can be done only by Him who has created all. If someone were to spend the entire wealth of the world to make this happen by creating love in the hearts of people who hate each other, even then, this feat shall remain beyond his reach and control.

Real and Lasting Unity among Muslims depends on Obedience to Allah Ta'ālā

This also tells us that uniting the hearts of people and making them mutually filled with love for each other is a blessing from Allah and it is also obvious that this blessing cannot be hoped for in the presence of disobedience to Allah Ta'ālā, in fact, for any hope to have His blessing, obedience to Him and the seeking of His pleasure are binding conditions.

No sensible person from any religion or community would differ about unity among individual and social groups as being commendable and beneficial. Therefore, everyone who is concerned about reforming people puts stress on uniting them together. But, the world at large (as we have found it and fashioned it) is unaware of the reality of things - that full and lasting unity cannot be forged and received on an assembly line through pragmatic designs. This can be achieved only through obedience to Allah Ta'ālā and the seeking of His pleasure. The Holy Qur'an has pointed out to this reality in several verses. For instance, at one such place, it was said: *وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا* (Hold the cord of Allah firmly, all of you, and do not be divided - 3:103). Given here is the method of avoiding differences and dissensions. The method is that everyone should firmly hold on to the cord of Allah - the Qur'an or the Shari'ah of Islām - and, as a result, everyone shall stand united together all by themselves and all mutual differences would evaporate from the scene. As for the normal difference of opinion, that is something else. If it remains within its limits, it never becomes the cause of dissensions and disputes. Dispute and disorder erupt only when the limits of Shari'ah are crossed. In our day, everyone loves to harp on unity. But, the meaning of unity everyone is fond of taking is: If people agree to what I say, everyone will stand united. And others too who are equally concerned about unity would very much like them to agree to what they say, and thus claim that this is the only way for all to be united. Although, when a normal difference of opinion is inevitable, even necessary, among reasonable and honest people, then, it is evident that should everyone make his or her agreement with the other person depend on the eventuality that the other person agrees to what he or she says, then, mutual unity cannot materialize until the Day of Doom. Instead of all that, there is just no sound and natural format of unity other than that which has been given by the Holy

Qur'an - that both parties sit together and agree to what a third party has to say, and this third party has to be the one about whom it is certain that the decision of this party will be free of error. It goes without saying that Allah alone can be such a decision-maker. It is for this reason that, in the present verse, it has been advised that everyone should hold on to the cord of Allah firmly and jointly whereby mutual disputes will evaporate in thin air and perfect unity shall prevail.

In Sūrah Maryam, it was said: **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا** (Surely, among those who believe and do good deeds, the All-Merciful [Allah] generates love - 19:96). This verse makes it clear that the real method through which hearts shall be filled with genuine love and intense fellow feeling is adherence to the dictates of Faith and insistence on doing what is good and right. Without it, even if some kind of unity could be artificially arrived at, that 'unity' will be simply baseless and weak making it disintegrate at the slightest provocation or pressure - something commonly noticed in the experiences of peoples around the whole world. In short, for our instant purpose, this verse explains how the blessing which was bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā on the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم - a blessing which was to generate mutual love into the hearts of all tribes of Madīnah making them all set to help and support the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم - went on to turn his supporters into an iron wall for him.

In the second verse (64) as well, by stating the same subject briefly, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been comforted by telling him that sufficient for him is Allah Ta'ālā in the real sense, and the group of believers in the physical sense. So, he should have no fear of an enemy, no matter how big, strong, numerous or well-equipped. Commentators have said that this verse was revealed before actual fighting started in the battle of Badr so that Muslims, small in numbers and virtually un-equipped, would not be overawed by the heavy numerical and technical superiority of their adversary.

Mentioned for Muslims in the fourth (65) and fifth (66) verse, there is a law of war which stipulates the limit to which it was obligatory (*farḍ*) for them to stand resolutely against their adversary - and any retreat from which was a sin. In previous verses and events, it has been mentioned in detail that the unseen help of Allah Ta'ālā is with Muslims for their matter is different, not like that of the peoples of the

world at large. They, even if small in numbers, can overcome a lot more of their challengers as stated in the Holy Qur'an:

كَمْ مِّن فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِتْنَةُ كَثِيرَةٍ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

There are many smaller groups which overcome larger groups with the will of Allah - 2:249).

Therefore, ten Muslims were declared to be equal to one hundred men in the first Jihād of Islām at the famous battle of Badr where the command given was:

وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ .

If there are twenty among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred; and if there are one hundred among you, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve - 8:65

The style of expression used here is that of a welcome news flash - that one hundred Muslims shall overcome one thousand disbelievers. But, the purpose is to order that it is not permissible for one hundred Muslims to run against one thousand disbelievers. The wisdom behind using the style of news is to make the hearts of Muslims become strong with this glad tidings telling them that Allah is promising their safety and victory. Had this order been announced in the imperative mood as a law, it would have naturally weighed heavy on temperaments.

The encounter at Badr was the very first battle Muslims had ever fought. At that time, they were in a terrible condition. The total number of Muslims itself was insignificant. Then, all of them had not gone to the war front. The hard fact was that only those who could get ready on the spot were the ones who became the 'army' of this war. Therefore, in this Jihād, one hundred Muslims were commanded to confront one thousand disbelievers in a style which carried the promise of Divine help and support.

In the fourth verse (66), by abrogating this injunction for future, the second injunction given was:

الَّذِي خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِّائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ ۚ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ .

Now Allah has made it easy on you and He knew that there is

weakness in you. So, if there are one hundred among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred - 8:66.

Here too, the purpose is to order that it is not permissible for one hundred Muslims to avoid fighting against two hundred disbelievers. It will be recalled that, in the first verse (65), the avoidance of one Muslim to fight against ten was declared to be forbidden. Here, in this verse (66), the avoidance of one against two was all that remained forbidden. And this is the last and final injunction which is operative for ever and shall continue as such.

Here too, the command does not appear in the usual style of a command. Instead, the manner used is that of glad tidings which indicates that asking one Muslim to go out and stand firm against two disbelievers was, God forbid, no injustice or coercion. To be honest, Allah Ta'ālā has Himself placed in a Muslim person - because of his 'Īmān or Faith - a special power that one of them turns out to be equal to two.

But, at both places, the glad tidings about this support and victory has been made subject to the condition that these Muslims should be observers of patience and fortitude. It is obvious that standing steadfast while endangering one's dear life in fighting and killing on a battlefield is a feat which can be performed only by a person whose 'Īmān is perfect - because, perfect 'Īmān generates enthusiasm for surrendering one's life in the way of Allah and this enthusiasm multiplies his combat strength a lot more.

Towards the end of the verse, it was in the manner of a general principle that it was stated: وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ (And Allah is with the patient - 66). Included here, there are those who remain steadfast in the battlefield as well as those who keep following the usual injunctions of the Shari'ah strictly. The promise of Divine company stands good for all of them and in this state of His being with one and all of them lies the real secret of their victory - because, whoever has the good fortune of having the company of the Absolute Master simply cannot be moved away from the station of duty by anyone, not even by the whole world in unison.

Verses 67 - 69

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أُسْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يُشْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ط

تَرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
 ﴿٦٧﴾ لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ
 عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبَاتٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾

It is not for a prophet that there remain prisoners with him until he has had a thorough blood-shed in the land. You want things of this world while Allah wants the Hereafter (for you). And Allah is Mighty, Wise. [67] Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier, there would have reached you, for what you took, a great punishment. [68]

So, eat of the spoils you have got, lawful and pure, and fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [69]

Commentary

The verses cited above relate to a particular event of the battle of Badr. Therefore, prior to an explanation, it is necessary to describe this event on the authority of sound and authentic narrations appearing in Ḥadīth.

The scenario of the event is the battle of Badr. It was the first Jihād in Islām, and it had come up all of a sudden. Until then, the detail of injunctions pertaining to Jihād was not revealed. There were questions. If spoils come on hand during Jihād, what should be done with it? If enemy soldiers fall under your control, whether or not it is permissible to arrest them? And if they are arrested, what should be done with them?

The law of spoils operative in the religious codes of past prophets was that it was not lawful for Muslims to use them for their benefit. Instead, the injunction was that the entire spoils be collected and placed in some open field. According to a Divine practice, a fire would come from the skies and burn the whole thing. This was taken to be a sign that the particular Jihād was approved of. If the fire from the skies did not come to burn the spoils, it was taken to be a sign that there was some shortcoming in the Jihād effort because of which it was considered unacceptable with Allah.

According to narrations in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: 'I have been blessed with five things which were not bestowed on any prophet before me.' One of these was that spoils acquired from disbelievers was not lawful for anyone, but it was made lawful for the Muslim Ummah, the traditional recipient of mercy from Allah. That the property of spoils was particularly lawful for this Ummah already existed in the infinite knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā, but no revelation attesting to its being lawful had been sent to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم until the event of the battle of Badr referred to above. And what happened in the battle of Badr was that Allah Ta'ālā blessed Muslims with an extraordinary victory which was totally beyond their imagination. The enemy also left behind its belongings which fell into the hands of Muslims as spoils. Then they took seventy of their big chiefs as prisoners. But, the necessary clarification of whether or not the later two actions were permissible was yet to come through a Divine revelation.

Therefore, this hasty action taken by the noble Companions was censured. This censure and displeasure was demonstrated through a revelation in which Muslims were given a choice between two courses of action in the case of the prisoners of war. But, when giving this choice, it was also pointed out to them that, out of the two aspects of the case, one was desirable while the other was undesirable. Based on a narration from Sayyidnā 'Alī al-Murtaḍā رضى الله عنه, it has been reported in Jāmi' Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī and Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān that on this occasion Sayyidnā Jibrā'īl al-Amīn came to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and communicated to him the command that he should give his Companions a choice between two courses of action: (1) That they either kill these prisoners and destroy the image of enemy power for ever; (2) or, that they are released against some payment of *fidyah* (ransom). However, should this second option be taken, it has to be borne in mind that it stands Divinely ordained that, in return for this next year, the number of Muslims who will fall as martyrs will match the number of prisoners who will be released today on payment of ransom. Though, the two courses of action did have the element of choice and the Companions did have the option of going by any one of the two, but, in the second option where mention was made of the eventuality of the martyrdom of seventy Muslims, there did exist a delicate indication towards the undesirability of the second option in the sight

of Allah Ta'ālā - because, had it been desirable, the killing of seventy Muslims would have not been binding as a result.

When these two alternatives were presented before the Companions as a matter of choice for them, some of them thought if these people were released against payment of ransom, it was quite possible that they all, or some of them, may become Muslims at some later stage which would, then, be the real gain, and the very objective of Jihād itself. They also thought that Muslims were poor at that time and should they make some financial gain through ransom for seventy men, that would not only help remove their hardship but also contribute towards their preparations for Jihād in future. As for the martyrdom of seventy Muslims, it was a standing blessing and good fortune for Muslims themselves. Why should they worry about something so welcome, they thought. It was in view of these thoughts that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه and most of the Companions tilted towards the option of releasing the prisoners against ransom. Only Sayyidnā 'Umar, Sayyidnā Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh and some other Companions رضى الله عنهم differed with this opinion and recommended the option of killing them all on the ground that it was a good chance as all Quraysh chiefs, who sponsor and supply the entire striking force arrayed against Muslims, had fallen into their hands at one given time. That they would embrace Islām in the near future was a figment of their imagination. However, what was more likely to happen was that these people, once they return, will become the cause of enhanced hostility against Muslims, much too pronounced than ever before.

As for the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he had come to grace this mortal world as the universal messenger of mercy - and was himself mercy personified - he looked at the two opinions from the Ṣaḥābah and accepted the one which provided mercy and ease for prisoners - that they be released against ransom. Addressing Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Umar رضى الله عنه, he said: **لو اتفقتما ما خالفكما** (Had you two agreed upon any one opinion, I would have not acted against the opinion given by you two). (Maḥzarī) Faced with a difference of opinion at that time, it was but the dictate of his inherent mercy and affection he had for the creation of Allah that the course of ease and convenience was taken to in their case. So, that was what was done. And the outcome was that next year, at the time of the battle of 'Uḥud,

the event of the martyrdom of seventy Muslims came to pass as Divinely indicated.

In the words: تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا (You want things of this world - 67), the address is to the noble Companions who had suggested release for ransom. This verse tells them that they had given improper advice to the *Rasūl* of Allah because it did not match with the august station of any prophet that he would not, once he overpowers the enemies, go on to demolish their power and its image, instead, would opt for granting relief to a wicked and conspiratorial enemy only to commit Muslims to everlasting trouble.

The words used in this verse are: حَتَّى يُشْخِطَ فِي الْأَرْضِ (until he has had a thorough blood-shed in the land - 67). Lexically, the word: اِثْكَانَ (*ithkhan*) means to demolish someone's might and power exhaustively and conclusively. The words: فِي الْأَرْضِ (*fi 'l-ard* : in the land) have been made to follow in order to intensify this very sense of total termination.

As for the Ṣaḥābah who had recommended release against ransom, part of their view was, no doubt, purely religious - they hoped that, once free, these people may embrace Islām. But, alongwith it, part of it was motivated by personal interest as well - that they will have spoils to bring back - although, until that time, there was no decisive textual authority which proved spoils as permissible property for Muslims. Therefore, in view of the high standards being set for the society of men and women under the education, training and guidance of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم - standards which aimed to take them to ranks even higher than angels - the slightest turn of thought towards material acquisitions was considered a kind of disobedience. Thus, it goes without saying that the sum total of what is a potpurri of deeds which are both permissible and impermissible will, after all, be called impermissible. Therefore, such conduct from the Ṣaḥābah met with displeasure and it was said: 'تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ' : 'You want things of this world while Allah wants the Hereafter (for you) - 67,' that is, Allah wants you to seek the Hereafter. Mentioned here as reprimand was a particular act of theirs which was the cause of displeasure. The other cause, that of the hope of released prisoners becoming Muslims, was not mentioned here. This indicates that a special group like the group of righteous, sincere and noble Ṣaḥābah would accommodate such mixed up intention as would combine some faith and

some personal interest was something not acceptable even in that degree. Worth noticing here is the fact that the admonition and warning in this verse are being addressed to the noble Ṣaḥābah. Though, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم too, by accepting their opinion, had gone along with them in a certain way, but, this act of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was purely a demonstration of his being universally merciful when he, subsequent to a difference of opinion among the Ṣaḥābah, had gone by a course of action which promised grace and convenience for the prisoners.

At the end of the verse, by saying: وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (And Allah is Mighty, Wise - 67), it was pointed out that Allah Ta'ālā, being the source of all might and wisdom, would have - only if they had not acted in a hurry - provided for them wealth and properties as well in their future victories through His infinite grace.

The second verse (68) is also a supplement to this admonition where it has been said that had it not been for a Divine writ already established, the course of action which you opted for - that of releasing the prisoners against ransom - would have brought upon you some grave punishment.

What is this writ and what does it mean? According to a narration from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضى الله عنه reported in Tirmidhī, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Spoils were not lawful for any community before you. When, on the occasion of Badr, Muslims went after collecting spoils - though, spoils were not made lawful for them until that time - this verse was revealed. It emphasized that this initiative taken by Muslims, before the injunction making spoils lawful for them was revealed, was a sin which deserved instant punishment. But, since the writ of Allah that spoils shall be made lawful for this community was already there in the Preserved Tablet, therefore, punishment was not sent over Muslims for this misconduct. (Maḏharī)

It appears in Ḥadīth narrations that, subsequent to the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: The Divine punishment was almost about to descend when Allah, in His grace, held it back and had this punishment come, no one except 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Sa'd ibn Mu'adh رضى الله عنهما would have remained safe from it. This tells us that the cause of Divine admonition was the act of releasing prisoners against ransom - and, in the light of the narra-

tion from Tirmidhī mentioned earlier, the reason seems to be the act of collecting spoils. But, there appears to be no contradiction between the two. Taking ransom from prisoners is also nothing but a part of spoils.

Ruling 1: In the verse under discussion, admonition came upon releasing prisoners against ransom or collecting spoils, warning of Divine punishment was given, then came forgiveness. But, what remained still not clear was the future course Muslims would be required to take in such matters. Therefore, in the next verse (69), the matter relating to spoils was made all too clear by saying: نَكُلُوا مِمَّا غَنِمْتُمْ (So, eat of the spoils you have got), that is, it has been made lawful for you in the future. But, even now, there remains a doubt to the effect that the injunction making spoils lawful had come at the present stage, however, spoils which had been collected in error before the coming of this injunction may contain some element of undesirability in it. Therefore, by saying: عَلَاةً طَيِّبَةً (lawful and pure - 69) soon after it, even this doubt was removed. It means: Though, taking the initiative in collecting spoils, before the revelation of Divine guideline, was not correct - but now that the injunction making spoils lawful has been revealed, all that has been collected earlier is also lawful without any shade of repugnance or reprehensibility (*karahah*) in it.

Ruling 2: At this point, worth notice and retention is a principle of Islāmic jurisprudence: When some impermissible initiative is regularized through a standing verse, no effect of the previous initiative remains operative therein. The property becomes lawful and pure - as it happened here. But, there is a corresponding instance relevant to what has been stated above. Take a case in which there was an injunction already revealed, but its revelation did not seem to affect the initiators of an action, based on which they went on to contravene it. It was later on that they found out that the particular deed of theirs was contrary to such and such injunction of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Then, in such a situation, after the coming of the injunction, that property does not remain lawful - even though the previous error is forgiven. (Nūru 'l-Anwār, Mullā Jīwan) However, in the present verse, spoils have, no doubt, been declared to be lawful and pure, but the restriction imposed at the end of the verse was: وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (and fear Allah. Surely, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful - 69). The hint given here is that, though spoils have been made lawful, but that too has been made

lawful under a particular law. Taking against that law or taking more than due shall not still be permissible.

There were two matters in question here: (1) Spoils (2) Release of prisoners against ransom. The first problem was resolved clearly by the present verse, but the other matter was yet to be cleared. Regarding this, the following verse of Sūrah Muḥammad was revealed:

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثْخَنْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ
فِيمَا مَنَآءَ بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءٌ حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا .

So, when you confront those who disbelieve at war, then keep beheading them until when you have had a thorough bloodshed to break their power, then shackle them tight. After that, either free them as favour without any return or release them against ransom - until the war lays down its arms - (47:4)

Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه says: Divine admonition came upon releasing prisoners against ransom in the battle of Badr. This was the first Jihād of Islām. That was a time when the might and power of disbelievers was yet to break apart. It was by chance that they had run into trouble. Finally, when Islām and Muslims went on to achieve total ascendancy, Allah Ta‘ālā abrogated the earlier injunction and revealed the verse of the Sūrah Muḥammad quoted above in which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Muslims have been given four options about prisoners. These are:

ان شاء وا قتلوهم وان شاءوا استعبدوهم وان شاء وا افادوهم وان شاء وا اعتقوهم .

If they wish, they can kill them all; or if they wish, they can put them in bondage; or if they wish, they can release them against ransom; or if they wish, they can (just) free them (without taking any ransom). (Maḥzarī)

There is a consensus of the entire Muslim Ummah on the first two of the four options mentioned above that the Amir of Muslims has the dual right of killing the prisoners and holding them in bondage, but there is a difference of opinion among Muslim jurists about setting them free without compensation or releasing them against it.

The position taken by Imām Mālīk, Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Thawrī, Ishāq, and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and ‘Aṭā’ from among the Ṭabī‘īn, is

that both these forms are permissible for the Amir of Muslims - that he may release the prisoners against compensation, or set them free without compensation, or exchange them for Muslim prisoners.

But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad, Awzā'ī, and Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Suddiyy and Ibn Jurayj say that setting them free is just not permissible without compenstion. Even releasing them against ransom is not permissible in the well-known creed of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah. However, it appears in a report of al-Siyar al-Kabir that, should Muslims be in need of financial support, they can release prisoners against ransom. However, releasing them in exchange for Muslim prisoners is permissible with Imām Abū Hanifah and the two Jurists, Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad. (As evident from the two reports from them - Mazharī).

Those who have permitted release against ransom or without ransom, they - as said by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās - regard the verse of Sūrah Muḥammad to be the abrogator (*nāsikh*) of the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and take the later as abrogated (*mansūkh*). According to Ḥanafī jurists, what stands abrogated (*mansūkh*) is the verse of Sūrah Muḥammad, while the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl: فَتَرْدِيهِمْ مِّنْ خَلْفِهِمْ (make them an example for those behind them -57) and Sūrah Al-Taubah: أَقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ (kill the Mushriks wherever you find them -9:5) are its abrogator (*nāsikh*). Therefore, according to them, it is not permissible to release the prisoners, whether against ransom or without it. (Mazharī)

But, a careful deliberation into the respective words of the verses of Sūrah Al-Anfāl and Sūrah Muḥammad leaves us with the impression that none of these two can be called the abrogator or the abrogated. In fact, they are two injunctions for two different situations.

It can be seen that the pivotal injunction of breaking the power of disbelievers (اِثْخَانٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ) has been taken up in the verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl, then, the option of releasing prisoners without compensation or against it (in the form of: مِنْ وَفْدًا) has been given in Sūrah Muḥammad too, but the main objective has already been stated in the former - that of 'ithkḥān fī 'l-arḍ'. Thus, it means that once the power facade of the disbelievers has been broken through a thorough blood-shed, Muslims have the option of releasing prisoners against ransom, or setting them free without any ransom.

The report of al-Siyar al-Kabīr from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah could also be intended to establish that both kinds of injunctions can be given keeping in view the conditions and needs Muslims are faced with. وَاللَّهُ ۚ¹ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ أَعْلَمُ

Verses 70 - 71

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَن فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ ۖ إِن يَتْلَمْ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِنْ يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

O Prophet, say to the prisoners in your hands, 'If Allah knows of any good in your hearts, He will give you something better than what has been taken from you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [70]

And if they intend to commit treachery against you, then, they have already committed treachery against Allah, so Allah has given (you) power over them. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. [71]

Commentary

The prisoners taken in the battle of Badr were released against ransom. These were sworn enemies of Islām and Muslims who had left nothing undone when it came to harassing, torturing, beating and killing them, anytime, anywhere. The slightest opportunity on hand would make them inflict their savagery on them. Now that they were prisoners in the hands of Muslims, granting them a lease of life was no mean feat. In fact, it was much more than adequate for them, virtually touching the outside limits of kindness under given circumstances. Then, the amount of ransom taken from them was far too ordinary.

Certainly great is the kindness of Allah Ta'ālā. Imagine the consideration shown for the discomfort caused to them in paying that paltry sum for freedom and see how it is removed. It has been said in verse 70: If Allah shall find any good in your hearts, then, He shall give you

1. Some more detail about the war-prisoners will appear in the commentary of Sūrah Muḥammad *insha-allah*. (Editor)

what is better than what has been taken from you - and in addition to that, He shall forgive your past sins. The word: خَيْر (*khayr*: good) used here means 'Imān (faith) and Ikhlāṣ (sincerity). The sense of the statement is that prisoners who, once they are free, were to take to 'Imān and Islām with sincerity, then, they shall be receiving more and better than what they have given in ransom. Thus, made free and independent, the prisoners have been invited to consider their profit and loss as free individuals. In consequence, events prove that those from among them who embraced Islām were so heavily rewarded by Allah Ta'ālā right here in this mortal world with wealth and property which was way higher than what they had paid as ransom - not to mention the forgiveness they were blessed with and the high ranks of Paradise they received in the Hereafter.

Most commentators have said that this verse was revealed about Sayyidnā 'Abbās رضى الله عنه, the uncle of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم because he too was one of the prisoners of Badr and ransom was taken from him too. His case was special in that he had left Makkah to participate in the battle of Badr with almost seven hundred guineas of gold on his person which was meant to be spent on the army of the disbelievers. However, before this could be spent, he was taken a prisoner with the gold.

When came the time to pay ransom, he said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the gold he had with him should be applied to cover the amount of his ransom. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: The wealth you brought to support disbelief became war spoils for Muslims. Ransom has to be in addition to that. Alongwith it, he also said: You should also pay the ransom for your two nephews, 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib and Nawfil ibn Ḥārith. Thereupon, Sayyidnā 'Abbās said: If so much financial burden was placed on me, I shall have to beg before the Quraysh like a pauper. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: Why? What about the wealth you had entrusted with your wife, Umm al-Faḍl while leaving Makkah? Sayyidnā 'Abbās asked: How did you know this when I had entrusted it with my wife in the darkness of night, personally and in private. There is no third person who knows about it. He said: My Rabb has told me everything about it. When Sayyidnā 'Abbās heard these words, his heart became certain that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was a true messenger of Allah. In fact,

Sayyidnā ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه had held the Holy Prophet in esteem even before this happened, but there were some doubts as well - which Allah Ta‘ālā removed at this moment. So, in reality, he had become a Muslim right then. But, he had a lot of money he had loaned out to the Quraysh of Makkah. If he were to declare his conversion to Islām immediately at that time, all that money would have gone waste. Therefore, he did not make a public announcement of it and the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم too said nothing about it to anyone. Before the Conquest of Makkah, he requested the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for his permission to migrate from Makkah to Madīnah. But, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم advised him not to do that yet.

Following this conversation with Sayyidnā ‘Abbās رضى الله عنه, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also told him about the promise appearing in the present verse which says that should he embrace Islām and become a Muslim with unalloyed sincerity of heart, then, the money he has spent in ransom shall be returned to him by Allah Ta‘ālā making it much more and much better for him. Hence, it was after his adherence to Islām had become public knowledge, he used to say: As for me, I am seeing the manifestation of this promise with my own eyes - because the amount of gold taken from me in ransom at that time was seven hundred guineas (20 *Uqiyah*). Now, at present, twenty of my slaves are running businesses at several places and no business venture being run by them is worth any less than twenty thousand dirhams each. And on top of all this, I have been blessed with the opportunity to serve Ḥujjāj, the visiting pilgrims, by providing to them drinking water from the sacred well of Zamzam - a service I consider to be so valuable as would pale out the possession of the entire wealth of the people of Makkah.

About some prisoners of the battle of Badr who had become Muslims, there remained a doubt that they, once back in Makkah, may turn away from Islām and start hurting them thereafter. In the next verse (71), Allah Ta‘ālā has removed this apprehension by saying: **إِنْ يُرِيدُوا** خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (And if they intend to commit treachery against you, then, they have already committed treachery against Allah, so Allah has given [you] power over them. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise). It means that should these people decide to commit a breach of trust with you, it will not bring any hurt or loss to you.

They were the same people who had already committed a breach of trust with Allah. They had admitted of Allah being the Lord of all the worlds at the time of the original Covenant, then they became hostile to it. But, this breach of trust turned out to be fatal for none but them when, finally, they were disgraced and detained. As for Allah Ta'ālā, He is the knower of secrets hidden in hearts, and He is the possessor of great wisdom. If these people start opposing you even now, there is nowhere they can go, certainly not anywhere outside the range of the power and control of Allah Ta'ālā. Inevitably, He shall seize them as before. To sum up, it can be said that, in verse 70, the *da'wah* of Islām was given to the released prisoners in the mode of persuasion - while in verse 71, it was in the mode of warning that they were told that success in their worldly life and in their life to come depends on Islām and 'Imān.

Upto this point, the text was dealing with injunctions relating to fighting and killing disbelievers, taking them prisoners, setting them free and carrying on peace negotiations with them. In verses which follow right upto the end of the Sūrah itself, a particular related chapter has been taken up alongwith some details of its injunctions. They are the injunctions of Hijrah (Emigration) - because, situations can arise during a confrontation with disbelievers wherein neither the Muslims have the power to launch an attack against them and kill them off, nor are they willing to go for peace. In such a state of weakness, the only course through which Islām and Muslims can be salvaged is Hijrah (Emigration) which means that Muslims should leave that city or country and go to stay in some other land where acting freely in accordance with Islāmic injunctions is possible.

Verses 72 - 75

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ وَلَا يَتِيهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۖ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ
تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَهَاجَرُوا وَجْهَهُدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجْهَهُدُوا مَعَكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ
وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾

Surely those who believed and emigrated and carried out Jihād in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives, and those who give refuge and help --- those are friends to each other. And those who believed and did not emigrate, with them you have no friendship at all unless they emigrate. And if they seek your help in the matter of faith, then, you are bound to help except against a people who have a treaty between you and them. And Allah is watchful over what you do. [72]

And those who disbelieve are friends to each other. If you do not do so, there shall be disorder on the earth, and a great corruption. [73]

And those who have believed and emigrated and carried out Jihād in the way of Allah, and those who gave refuge and help --- those are the believers in truth. For them there is forgiveness and a respectful provision. [74]

And those who believed later on and emigrated and participated with you in Jihād, then, they are one of you. As for the womb-relatives, some of them are closer to some as in the Book of Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of every thing. [75]

Commentary

These are the last four verses of Sūrah Al-Anfal. The real objective therein is to describe the injunctions of Hijrah (Emigration) which relate to the inheritance of Muhājir (Emigrant) Muslims. In contrast, also mentioned there is the inheritance of non-Muhājir Muslims and non-Muslims.

The gist of these injunctions is that people who fall under Islamic legal authority are, in the first instance, of two kinds: (1) Muslim (2) Kāfir (disbeliever). Then, in terms of that period of time, Muslims were of two kinds: (1) Muhājir, those who after *hijrah* becoming obligatory, had left Makkah and had settled in Madīnah. (2) Non-Muhājir, those who had, for a valid reason or for some other reason, stayed behind in Makkah itself.

Mutual relationship was a common factor among individuals from all these kinds because, during the early period of Islām, it was quite common that a son would be Muslim while the father would be a Kāfir, or a father would be Muslim while his son would be a Kāfir. The same was true about other relationships, such as, brothers, nephews, maternal grandfathers and maternal uncles etc. And that there were mutual relationships among Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims is fairly obvious.

Allah Ta'ālā has, in His perfect mercy and profound wisdom, declared that the wealth and property left by the deceased person belongs to his or her own relatives as its deserving recipients. Although, the initial reality was that whoever received anything during this mortal life was entirely owned and possessed by Allah Ta'ālā in the real sense. It was a simple arrangement from Him that everyone was made, on His behalf, a temporary owner of what was given to man to use for a life-time and derive benefit from it. Therefore, by all canons of logic, reason and justice the inheritance of every deceased person should have ricocheted back into His ownership - the practical implementation of which was to have it placed in the Public Treasury of the Islāmī State which serves the great masses of people created by Allah by fulfilling their multi-faceted developmental needs. But, in doing so, first of all everyone would have been naturally hurt to find out that, after death, one's wealth and property will not reach one's own children, nor to parents, nor to wife or husband. Then, its logical consequence was also somewhat equally natural - that no one would have cared to work for more and take steps to keep it preserved. In other words, no one would have been burning his feet to work for more than what was needed to collect just about enough to take care of the basic needs of his or her life. And it is obvious that this attitude to life would have meant disaster for all human beings and their cities.

Therefore, Allah *Jalla thana'uh*, made inheritance the right of relatives among human beings, specially relatives for whose benefit one has been working hard and putting financial assets together during the course of one's life.

Alongwith it, while instituting the distribution of inheritance, Islām has also kept in sight the important objective for which human beings were created, that is, the obedience to and worship of Allah Ta'ālā - and it was in terms of this objective that the entire human species was declared to be two separate peoples or nations: Believers and Disbelievers. The verse of the Qur'ān: *خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ* (It is He who created you, then, among you there is a disbeliever and among you there is a believer - Al-Taghābun, 64:2) means exactly this.

This two-nation theory severed relationships based on lineage and kinship as far as it concerned inheritance stipulating that neither shall a Muslim receive a share from the inheritance of a related disbeliever, nor shall a Kāfir have any right in the inheritance of a Muslim relative. This is the subject stated in the first two verses (72, 73) and the injunction given therein is for ever, was never abrogated and has continued to be Islām's basic principle of inheritance since its very beginning and shall remain operative right through the day of Qiyāmah.

Allied with it, there is another injunction which concerns mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims about which it has been stated in the first verse that the relationship of a Muslim - until he emigrates from Makkah - shall also remain severed with Muslims who have emigrated, as far as inheritance is concerned. In this case, no Muhājir Muslim shall inherit his or her non-Muhājir relative, nor shall a non-Muhājir receive any share from the inheritance of a Muhājir Muslim. As obvious, this injunction was valid upto the time Makkah al-Mukarramah was still unconquered. After the Conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had himself declared: *لا هجرة بعد الفتح* (*lā hijrata ba'd al-fath* : There is no *hijrah* after the Conquest). It means that after the Conquest of Makkah the obligation of Hijrah does not remain operative any more, and when the obligation of Hijrah itself ceases to be operative any more, the question of severance of relationships with those who did not migrate stands automatically terminated.

Therefore, most commentators have said that this injunction

stands abrogated by virtue of the Conquest of Makkah while, according to investigative scholars of the field, this injunction too is everlasting and unabrogated - but that it has changed under specific conditions. If conditions in which this injunction was sent at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an were to reappear at some period of time or in some country, then, the same injunction will come into force once again.

To explain it further, it can be said that, before the Conquest of Makkah, every Muslim man and woman was obligated to migrate from Makkah as an absolute duty. In obedience to this injunction, most Muslims - with the exception of only a few - had migrated from Makkah to Madīnah. At that time, not migrating from Makkah had become a sign of not being a Muslim. Therefore, at that time, Islām as professed by a non-Muhājir was also taken to be doubtful and it was for this reason that mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir was severed.

Now, if the same conditions were to re-emerge in some country once again - that it becomes totally impossible to fulfill Islāmic obligations while living there - then, emigrating from that country will become obligatory once again, so much so that not emigrating under such conditions without a strong excuse, becomes a doubtless sign of disbelief, then, the same injunction shall still apply, that is, mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir shall not remain operative any more. This presentation, it is hoped, makes it clear that the injunction relating to the severance of mutual inheritance between Muhājir and non-Muhājir is really no separate injunction. In fact, it is the very same first injunction which describes the severance of inheritance between Muslim and non-Muslim. The only difference is that a non-muhājir in such a case was though deprived from the inheritance because of this sign of disbelief, yet he was not classed as a disbeliever just on the basis of this much sign of disbelief - unless, of course, one was to betray open, clear and decisive proof of one's Kufr or disbelief.

And perhaps, it is in view of this expedient consideration that yet another injunction relating to non-Muhājir Muslims has been mentioned at this place. This injunction specifies that, should they ask for help from Muhājir Muslims, then, it is necessary for Muhājir Muslims to help them - so that it becomes clear that they have not placed non-

Muhājir Muslims in the category of outright disbelievers, in fact, retained was their Islāmic right that they be helped when in need.

And since the background of the revelation of this verse is a particular Hijrah - that from Makkah to Madinah - while non-Muhājir Muslims were only those who had stayed back in Makkah threateningly surrounded by the disbelievers of Makkah, it is obvious that the help they sought could only be against the same disbelievers of Makkah. However, when the Holy Qur'an ordered Muhājir Muslims to help them out, then, given a surface view of things, it could be deduced from here that helping them has been made necessary for Muslims against all peoples and under all conditions - even if, the people against whom help is sought already have a no-war pact with Muslims - although, doing justice and upholding pledges is a serious duty in Islām. Therefore, in this verse, an exempting rule was mentioned according to which, should non-Muhājir Muslims seek help from Muhājir Muslims against a people with whom Muslims already have a no-war pact, then, helping even brother Muslims against treaty-covered disbelievers is not permissible.

This was the essential meaning of the first two sentences. Now let us look at it in synchronization with the words. It is being said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ، وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُمْ
مِنْ وَلَا بَيْنَهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا،

that is: "Those who believed and those who emigrated (for the sake of Allah, leaving their homeland and relatives behind) and carried out Jihād in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives (by buying weapons and other war materials with their wealth and by staking their lives in the line of duty on the battlefield - which refers to the original Emigrants, the first among Muhājirs) and those who gave refuge and help (which refers to the Anṣār of Madīnah, the supporting residents of Madīnah, whereafter it was said about the two parties) --- those are friends to each other. (Then, it was said:) And those who did believe but did not emigrate, with them you have no friendship at all unless they emigrate.

At this place, the Holy Qur'an has used the words: *Waliyy* and *Wilāyah* which mean friendship and close relations in the real sense. Ear-

ly Tafsīr authorities, Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥasan, Qatadah, Mujāhid and others have said that *Wilāyah* at this place means *Wirathah* or inheritance while *Waliyy* means *Wārith* or inheritor. Nevertheless, some others have taken *Wilāyah* in the usual lexical sense, that is, friendship, help and support.

According to the first Tafsīr, the verse would mean that Muslim Muhājir and Anṣār shall be inheritors to each other. Their bond of inheritance shall not remain operative either with non-Muslims or with particular Muslims who did not emigrate. The first injunction, that is, severance of inheritance on the basis of difference in religion, was for ever and remained as such. But, as for the second injunction, the position was that after the Conquest of Makkah, when Hijrah was no more needed, the injunction of severance of inheritance between the categories of Muhājir and non-Muhājir also did not remain operative any more. From here, some Muslim jurists have deduced that the way difference in religion is a cause of severance of inheritance, similarly, the difference in homelands is also the cause of severance of inheritance. A detailed discussion on this subject appears in books of Islāmī Fiqh.

After that, it was said: **وَإِنْ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ** (And if they seek your help in the matter of faith, then, you are bound to help except against a people who have a treaty between you and them. And Allah is watchful over what you do - 72). The sense of the statement is that people who have not migrated, relationship with them has though been terminated as far as inheritance is concerned, yet they are Muslims after all. If they seek help from Muhājir Muslims to safeguard their faith, then, to help them is obligatory on them. But, when doing so, Muhājir Muslims should not surrender rules of justice and their own fidelity to an existing treaty when a situation comes in which non-emigrating Muslims were to seek the help of Muhājir Muslims against a people with whom they already have a no-war pact. If so, even helping these Muslims against the peace pact party is not permissible.

A similar incident came to pass at the time of the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم arrived at a peace arrangement with the disbelievers of Makkah and included in the terms of peace was the condition that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would repatriate anyone who went to Madīnah thereafter. Just at the

time the peace treaty was being concluded, somehow there appeared Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه whom the disbelievers of Makkah had put in detention where he was being tortured in all sorts of ways. He presented himself in person before the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, told him how oppressed he had been and sought his help. Imagine this plaint was being made before none but him who had come to this world as the universal mercy. What this plaint from an oppressed Muslim would have done to his blessed heart is something everyone cannot realize easily. But, despite this empathy, he excused himself from helping him as bound by the injunction in the said verse, and let him go back.

His return in this manner was heart-rending for all Muslims present on the occasion. But, the blessed Prophet of Islām, guided by Divine words, was as if witnessing the welcome spectacle that the years of oppression were not going to last any longer and the reward of a few more days of patience was to be added to the destiny of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه. Then Makkah will soon be conquered. Then all these problems were going to be all over. Still, at that time, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم acted in accordance with the command of the Qur'ān and preferred treaty obligations over the personal misfortune of Sayyidnā Abū Jandal رضى الله عنه. This is the distinctive feature of the Shari'ah of Islām which has made its adherents deserving recipients of victory, honour, and success which awaits them in the Hereafter. Otherwise, as observed commonly, world powers play games with treaties and pacts. They use them as weights and levers to make the weak cringe and the strong walk in trap. The game plan always stays in their hands. With the slightest expediency in sight, they would unleash a hundred interpretations and kill the treaty and begin looking for scapegoats to put the blame on.

Said in the second verse (73) was: وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ (And those who disbelieve are friends to each other). The word: ولي (waliyy) used here, as stated earlier, carries a general sense included wherein is inheritance as well as the guardianship and patronage of affairs. Therefore, from this verse, we learn that disbelievers shall be considered inheritors to each other and the very law of the distribution of inheritance which is in force in their own religion shall be implemented as far as matters of their inheritance are concerned. In addition to

that, the guardian (*waliyy*) responsible for the upbringing of their orphaned children and for the marriage of their girls shall be from among them. In a nutshell, it means that, in family matters, the religious law of non-Muslims themselves shall stand duly protected in an Islāmic state.

At the end of the verse, it was said: *إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ* (And if you will not do so, there shall be disorder on the earth, and a great corruption - 73).

This sentence is connected with all those injunctions mentioned a little earlier, for instance, (1) the Muhājir and the Anṣār should be friends to each other, which includes mutual help and support, as well as inheritance; (2) the Muhājir and non-Muhājir Muslims of that period of time should not consider themselves related to each other in terms of inheritance, but the doors of help and support should remain open subject to relevant conditions; (3) the disbelievers were caretakers (*waliyy*) of each other, therefore, Muslims should not interfere with their law of guardianship and inheritance in any way.

Thereafter the text says if things were not done according to these injunctions, there shall be disorder and corruption on the earth. Perhaps, this warning has been given in view of the importance of the injunctions described here for they were based on major principles of equity, justice and public peace. The related verses make it amply clear that the way mutual help, support and inheritance depend on lineal bond - in the same manner, religious bond has its own importance in this matter. In fact, religious bond has precedence over lineal bond. This is the reason why a Kāfir (disbeliever) cannot inherit from a Muslim and a Muslim cannot inherit from a Kāfir - even though, they be fathers or sons or brothers by lineage. Along with it, in order to block religious prejudice and pagan partisanship, instructions were given that, no doubt, the religious bond is so formidable, yet standing by the terms of a treaty comes first and is more preferable. Contravention of the terms of a treaty is not permissible under the heat of religious partisanship. Similarly, also given was the instruction that the disbelievers are responsible for each other as guardians and inheritors, therefore, no interference should be made in their personal law of guardianship and inheritance. On the surface, these look like a few subsidiary injunctions, but they are, in reality, comprehensive basic

principles of equity and justice for all which guarantee world peace. This is the reason why, at this place, following the description of these injunctions, warning has been given in words which have not been generally used in the case of other injunctions: 'If you will not do so, there shall be disorder and corruption on the earth.' Also given within these words is a hint that these injunctions have an effectiveness of their own in checking disorder and corruption.

Mentioned in the third verse (74) are words of praise for the Ṣaḥābah who emigrated from Makkah and for the Anṣār of Madīnah who helped them, as well as the attestation to their being true Muslims and the promise of forgiveness and respectable provision made to them. When it was said: **أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا** (those are the believers in truth), the hint given was in the direction that those who did not migrate were though Muslims, but their Islām was neither perfect, nor certain - because there existed the probability that they may really be hypocrites professing Islām only outwardly. After that, it was said: **لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ** (For them there is forgiveness) - as it has been explained in sound (*Ṣaḥīḥ*) Aḥādīth: **الْإِسْلَامُ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ** (Islām demolishes what was before it) and: **وَالْهِجْرَةُ تَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهَا** (Hijrah razes what was before it). In short, this means that the act of becoming a Muslim goes on to demolish the entire edifice of past sins. Similarly, the making of Hijrah razes all past sins.

Described in the fourth verse (75) is the injunction concerning different categories of Muhājirīn (Muhājirs, emigrants). It says: Though, some of them are the very first among Muhājirīn - those who migrated earlier than the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. Then, there is a second category of Muhājirs - those who migrated after the Peace Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah and, because of this, there will be difference in the ranks they are to have in the Hereafter, but regarding injunctions of this mortal world, they too shall be covered by the injunction governing the first category of Muhājirīn in that they are inheritors to each other. Therefore, addressing the first among the Muhājirīn, it was said: **فَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنْكُمْ** (then, they are one of you - 75). It means that these Muhājirīn of the second category are also a part of your group. Hence, under injunctions governing inheritance, they are governed by rules which apply to Muhājirīn in general.

This is the very last verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl. Given at the end of it

is a comprehensive regulation of the law of inheritance through which stood abrogated what was an interim injunction promulgated during the early period of Hijrah mentioned in the preceding verses about having the Muhājirin and Anṣār become inheritors to each other through an arrangement of brotherhood between them. The words of the last verse which abrogated this temporary law of inheritance are: **وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِی كِتَابِ اللَّهِ** (As for the womb-relatives, some of them are closer to some as in the Book of Allah -75). Let us study them in a greater detail

In Arabic, the word: **اولو** (*ulu*) is used to carry the sense of being the possessor, owner, person or people of certain entitlement. In absence of an exact counterpart in English, it is usually translated as 'men of' or 'people of', as in: 'people of wisdom' for: **اولو العقل** (*ulu 'l-'aql*) and 'people of authority' for: **اولو الامر** (*ulu 'l-amr*). Therefore, the word: **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) means the people of *arḥām* or wombs. *Arḥām* is the plural of *raḥim* which is basically the name of the part of the body where the creative process of the human child takes place and since the bond of relationship is established via the association of *raḥim* (رحم), therefore, **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām* : translated literally as womb-relatives) is used in the sense of relatives.

The meaning of the verse is that, though a universal bond of brotherhood binds all Muslims to each other, because of which, if needed, helping and supporting each other becomes obligatory, and that they also inherit from each other. But, Muslims who are bound by mutual relationship have precedence over other Muslims. The phrase: **فِی كِتَابِ اللَّهِ** (*fī Kitābillah*: translated literally 'as in the Book of Allah - 75') at this place has been used in the sense of: **فِی حُكْمِ اللَّهِ** (*fī ḥukmi 'l-lāh*) which means that Allah Ta'ālā has made this law through His special command.

The rule of procedure given by this verse is that the distribution of inheritance should be on the criterion of relationship and the word: **اولو الارحام** (*ulu 'l-arḥām*) is applied to relatives in an absolute sense. Out of these, the shares of particular relatives have already been determined by the Holy Qur'ān in Sūrah al-Nisā'. These are called *Aṣḥāb al-Furūd* or *Dhawi al-Furūd* in the terminology of the Law of Inheritance. Popularly referred to as "Qur'ānic heirs," they mean those who are entitled to a statutory share in the inheritance of a deceased person. Any prop-

erty which remains, after the determined shares have been given, should be distributed over other relatives as provided in this verse. Then, it is also evident that it is not possible for anyone to distribute any property over all relatives because some kind of a distant relationship definitely exists among human beings of the whole world - for all of them owe their fact of birth to but one father and mother, Sayyidnā Ādam and Sayyidah Ḥawwā عليهم السلام (Ādam and Eve). Therefore, the only practical way of distributing inheritance over relatives can be that, by giving close relatives precedence over those distant, the benchmark of the near should be used to exclude the distant. A detailed description of this is present in the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which stipulate that, after having given the shares of *Dhawi al-Furūd* (Qur'ānic heirs), whatever remains should be given to the *Aṣḥāt* (agnates or paternal relatives) of the deceased person, degree-wise, that is, by giving precedence to the near agnate (*'aṣbah*) over the distant one, the benchmark of the near should be used to exclude the distant.

And in case, there is no one alive from among the agnates (*'aṣḥāt*), then, distribution has to be made over rest of the relatives.

In addition to *'aṣḥāt* or agnates, there are a host of other relatives. It is for them that the word: *Dhawi al-Arḥām* has been particularized in the technical terminology of the science of inheritance and distribution. But, this terminology has found currency in a later period. In the Holy Qur'ān, the word: *أُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ* (*ulu 'l-arḥām* : womb-relatives), according to its lexical connotation, covers all relatives included wherein are *Dhawi al-Furūd* (Qur'ānic heirs), *Aṣḥāt* (agnates) and *Dhawi al-Arḥām* (womb-relatives) in a general sense.

Then, some details about the subject have been covered in Sūrah al-Nisā' where Allah Ta'ālā has Himself determined the shares of particular relatives and which are known as *Dhawi al-Furūd* in the terminology of Inheritance. As for the rest, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has said:

الحقوا الفرائض باهلها فما بقى فهو لاولى رجل ذكر . (البخارى)

It means: After giving shares to those identified in the Qur'ān, that which remains is to be given to males nearer to the deceased. (al-Bukhārī)

They are known as 'Aṣḃāt (agnates) in the terminology of inheritance. If there be no one from among the 'aṣḃāt (agnates) of the deceased person, then, according to the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, other relatives get it. These relatives are technically known as *Dhawī 'l-Arḥām* (womb-relatives) such as, maternal uncle or maternal aunt and others.

The last sentence of this last verse of Sūrah Al-Anfāl has abrogated the law of Islāmic inheritance mentioned in verses earlier to this. According to that law, mutual inheritance used to be in force among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, even though there be no lenial kinship between them. It was abrogated because it was an emergency-oriented injunction given during the initial period of Hijrah.

Sūrah Al-Anfāl ends here. May Allāh Ta'ālā give us all the *Taufīq* of understanding it and acting in accordance with it.



Praised is Allah with whose help Sūrah al-'Anfāl comes to its conclusion the night of Thursday, 22nd of Jumada II, Hijrah Year 1381. I seek from Allah Ta'ālā His *Taufīq* and help in the *Tafsīr* of Sūrah al-Taubah and for Allah is all praise from its beginning to its end --- Muḥammad Shafī, may he be forgiven.

A review of it was completed on the day of Jumu'ah, 19th of Jumada I, Hijrah Year 1390 and praised be Allah for that.